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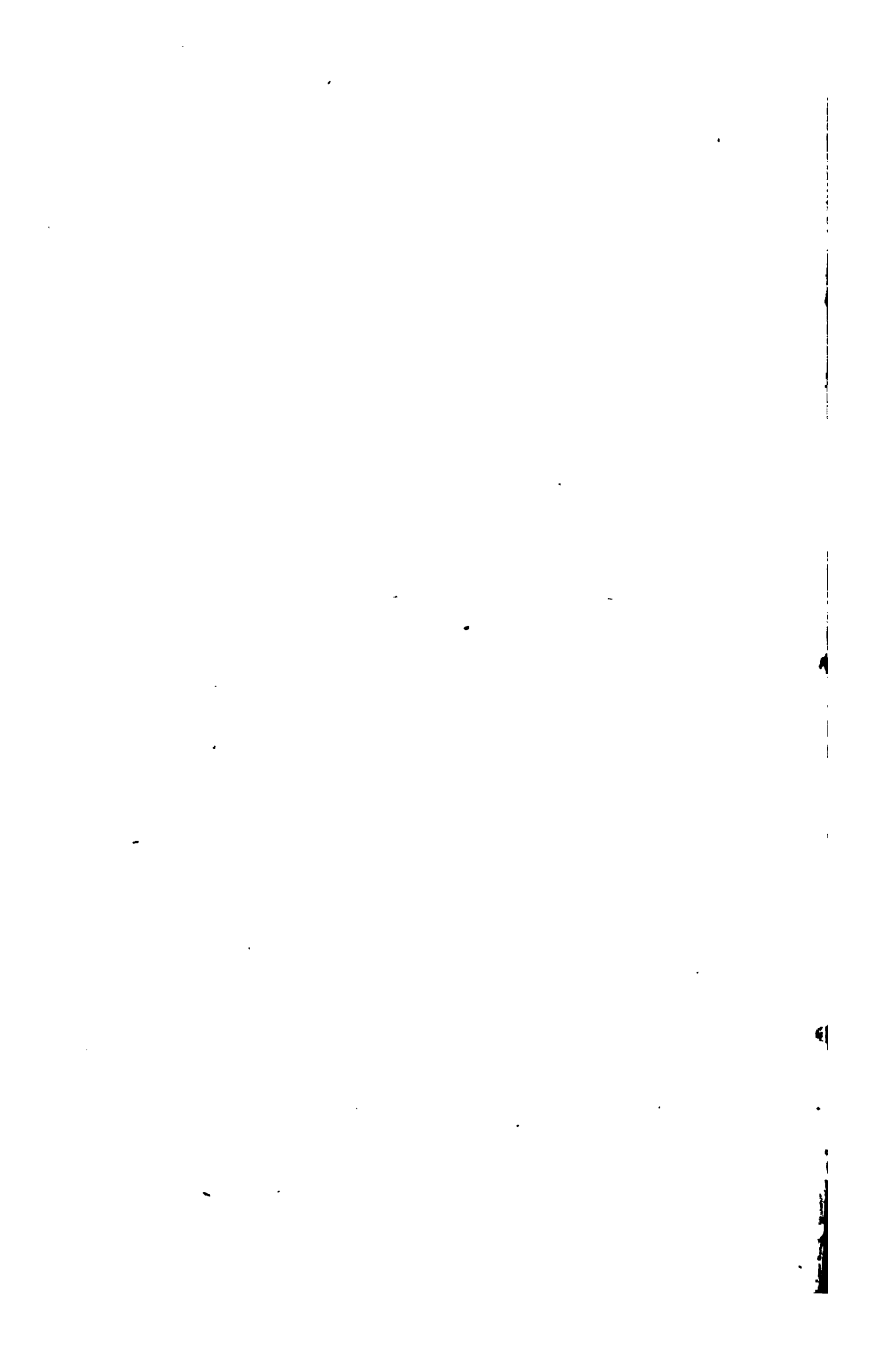
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**HISTORY**  
**OF THE**  
**ATONEMENT CONTROVERSY.**



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# HISTORY

OF THE

## ATONEMENT CONTROVERSY,

IN CONNEXION WITH

### THE SECESSION CHURCH,

FROM ITS ORIGIN TO THE PRESENT TIME.

BY THE REV. ANDREW ROBERTSON,  
STOW.



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# HISTORY

OF

## THE ATONEMENT CONTROVERSY.

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### CHAPTER I.

**Brief reference to the causes of the Secession—The Marrow Controversy ; its origin, progress, and results.**

Soon after the Revolution of 1688, which, by placing the Prince of Orange on the throne of these realms, put an end to the tyranny of the second James, hundreds of the Episcopal clergy in Scotland were not only allowed to keep possession of their livings, but were admitted, "upon the easiest terms," into the communion of the Presbyterian establishment. This instance of extreme leniency, for which the Commission of the Church of Scotland took credit, in an address presented to Queen Anne in the year 1712, was a fatal mistake, as it laid the foundation of that Moderate party which has ever been distinguished for its opposition, alike to the doctrines of grace and to the privileges of the people. Its hostility to the former manifested itself not many years before the Secession took place, particularly in the cases of Professor Simson, the Auchterarder Presbytery, and the Marrow of Modern Divinity.

As to the first of these cases : Professor Simson, who filled the Chair of Theology in the University of Glasgow, was libelled at the instance of the Rev. James Webster, a distinguished minister of Edinburgh, for having taught Arminian and Pelagian errors ; and yet, although it was proved he had been inculcating on the youth under his care the most erroneous sentiments respecting original sin—man's condition by nature, and the value of divine revelation—he was continued in office, and dismissed from the bar of the General Assembly, with no other caution for the future than what is contained in the following finding :—“ That he had vented some opinions not necessary to be taught in divinity, and that he had given more occasion to strife than to the promoting of edification ;—that he had used some expressions that bear and are used by adversaries in a bad and unsound sense, and for answering more satisfactorily, as he supposed, the cavils and objections of adversaries ;—that he had adopted some hypotheses different from what are commonly used among orthodox divines, that are not evidently founded on Scripture, and tend to attribute too much to natural reason and the power of corrupt nature ; which undue advancement of reason and nature is always to the disparagement of revelation and efficacious free grace : Therefore they prohibit and discharge the said Mr Simson to use such expressions, or to teach, preach, or otherwise vent such opinions, propositions, or hypotheses as aforesaid.”\*

The above deliverance given in 1717, indicated

\* Printed Minutes of Assembly, 1717.

but little zeal "for the faith once delivered to the saints," while as regarded the Professor himself, it had no beneficial effect whatever, as he persisted in teaching his heretical views, and even aggravated his offence by the addition of the Arian to the Pelagian Creed. This led to a second process being instituted against him, from which it appeared he was accustomed to teach.—"That the necessary existence of the Son is a thing that we know not; that the phrase *necessary existence* was impertinent, and not to be used when speaking of the Trinity; that the three persons of the adorable Trinity are not said to be numerically one in substance or essence; and that the terms necessary existence, Supreme Deity, and the titles of the only true God, may be taken, and are taken, by some authors, in a sense that includes the personal property of the Father, and so not belonging to the Son."

Such are the sentiments the Professor was in the habit of inculcating from the chair, in addition to the heresies for which he had been previously taken to task; nevertheless, instead of being deposed from the office of the ministry, and excluded from the fellowship of the church, he was simply deprived, yet not without difficulty, of his Professorship, and suspended from the discharge of his ecclesiastical functions; this sentence having been preceded by an expression of "high dissatisfaction with his conduct," which the Assembly, at a former meeting, "found themselves obliged to give forth, for the honour of truth, and in order to prevent the spreading of error."\*

\* Minutes of Assembly.

#### 4 ATONEMENT CONTROVERSY IN THE

It was on the occasion of the above deliverance being pronounced in 1729, that the venerated Boston, fired with a holy indignation, rose up in the General Assembly, and in the most solemn and impressive manner, declared his dissent from a sentence so totally inadequate to the offence. "I cannot help thinking, (said he to the Moderator,) that the cause of Jesus Christ, as to the great and essential point of his Supreme Deity, has been at the bar of this Assembly requiring justice; and as I am shortly to answer at His bar for all I do or say, I dare not give my assent to the decision of this act. On the contrary, I find myself obliged to offer a protest against it; and, therefore, in my own name, and in the name of all that shall adhere to me, and if none here will,"—(and when he pronounced these words, he looked round the house with an air of majesty and importance, and then added)—"For myself alone I crave leave to enter my protest against the decision of this act."\*

The same indifference on the part of the General Assembly, or rather hostility to the leading truths of the gospel, was evinced in the case of the Auchterarder Presbytery. This Presbytery, desirous of checking as much as possible, the legal style of preaching, then so lamentably prevalent, resolved to demand from candidates for license, an assent to the proposition,—“that it was not sound and orthodox to teach, that we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ, and instating us in covenant with God,”—but a young man, of the name of Craig,

\* Boston's Memoirs.

refusing to subscribe it, the matter was referred to the Assembly of 1717;—the same before which the first process against Professor Simson was brought, but\* with a widely different issue. The Professor was treated with gentleness, the deliverance in his case being couched in terms rather of apology than of rebuke, while the Presbytery were denounced in language the most violent, and their proposition scornfully designated, the Auchterarder Creed, was stamped with reprobation, as “unsound and detestable.”

This was sufficiently alarming to the friends of evangelical truth, followed up, as it soon was, by the condemnation of the Marrow of Modern Divinity.

The book, which bears the above title, was composed by Edward Fisher, “the eldest son of a knight, who became a gentleman commoner of Brazen Nose College in 1627,” and was afterwards “a noted person among the learned for his great reading in ecclesiastical history, and in the fathers, and for his admirable skill in the Greek and Hebrew languages.”\*

\* Wood’s *Athenæ Oxoniensis*, Vol. II. p. 198. By the opponents of the Marrow, it was asserted that Edward Fisher was a barber, upon which Riccalton remarks in his “*Sober Enquiry into the Grounds of the Present Differences*,” &c. page 42,—“But and if he was really such, what can any body make of it? So were Peter, James, and John, fishermen. And is it impossible for a barber to be a man of sense and learning? Nor do I know any piece of folly more foolish than that of valuing books by their authors; unless it is another of valuing authors by the time they have spent in universities, and the degrees they have taken there. I know this circumstance has been publicly contradicted from the press, but as I look upon that other account of the author, however better vouched, yet never a whit more authentick than this; so I own it, I value the Marrow more,

The book is written in the form of a dialogue, and consists chiefly of quotations from the works of Ainsworth, Bradford, Beza, Calvin, Luther, Lightfoot, Preston, and other celebrated divines. It consists of two parts. The first part is divided into four chapters which treat respectively,—of the Law of Works, or Covenant of Works;—of the Law of Faith, or Covenant of Grace;—of the Law of Christ;—and of the Heart's Happiness or Soul's Rest. The second part treats,—of the Ten Commandments;—the Examination of the Heart and Life by them;—the Reason why the Lord gave them;—and the Use that both believers and unbelievers are to make of them.

From the above particulars, the author, as will be seen, speaks of a threefold division of the Law, and in doing so, his object was, according to Riccalton, to take the middle way between the Antinomians and Legalists; and as the main question between them was, that about the obligation of the Law,—whether believers were under it, or altogether delivered from it? together with some other principles depending upon it, the author was of opinion, that if parties could be brought to understand one another, much jangling might be prevented; and that the best method for attaining this, would be to distinguish of the law, which, however, it is in itself one eternal truth, and continueth always the same, yet comes under very different views, according to the different stations allotted it under the two cove-

when I look upon it, as written by Edward Fisher, the barber, than when I consider it, as the work of the Learned and Honourable Edward Fisher."

nants, which are the measure and rule of God's dealings with man. From this he thinks to make it appear, that both parties have some truth on their side, and at the same time, for want of distinguishing, where there was really a difference, both have fallen into some mistakes; the great rock upon which both parties split being this, that they could not distinguish between the federal and normal power of the law; the law as a covenant of life, and the law as a rule of life, the law as it stands under a covenant of works, and the same law standing under a covenant of grace.

The second chapter of the Marrow, which treats of the Law of Faith or Covenant of Grace, as it is by much the longest, so it is by far the most important. It discusses the promise as made to Adam, and as renewed to Abraham;—the law as the covenant of works added to the promise;—the covenant of grace under the Mosaic dispensation;—the natural bias of the human mind towards the covenant of works;—Christ's fulfilling of the law in the room of the elect;—believers dead to the law as a covenant of works;—the warrant to believe;—evangelical repentance a consequent of faith;—the spiritual marriage with Jesus Christ;—untenableness of the doctrine of justification before faith;—and the freedom of believers from the power of the covenant of works.

The following passages which occur under this chapter, will exhibit the leading tenets of the work, and help to an understanding of subsequent discussions. "Section III., § 1, Christ's fulfilling of the law in the room of the elect."

"Evangelista, (a minister of the Gospel.) I do

now perceive that it is time for me to show how God, in the fulness of time, performed that which he purposed before all time, and promised in time concerning the helping and delivering of fallen mankind. And, touching this point, the scripture testifieth, that God did, in the fulness of time, send forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, &c., Gal. iv. 4, that is to say, look how mankind by nature are under the law, as it is the covenant of works; so was Christ as man's surety contented to be: so that now according to that eternal and mutual agreement that was betwixt God the Father and him, he put himself in the room and place of all the faithful, Isa. liii. 6. *And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Then came the law as it is the covenant of works, and said, I find him a sinner, yea, such a one as hath taken upon him the sins of all men; therefore, let him die upon the cross. Then said Christ '*Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast no pleasure.* Then said I, lo, I come to do thy will, O Lord,' Heb. x. 5, 6, 7, and so the law proceeding in full scope against him, set upon him and killed him; and by this means was the justice of God fully satisfied, his wrath appeased, and all true believers acquitted from all their sins, both past, present, and to come: so that the law, as it is the covenant of works, hath not any thing to say to any true believer, for indeed they are dead to it, and it is dead to them.

“§ 2. Believers dead to the law. I beseech you



be persuaded that here you are to work nothing, here you are to do nothing, here you are to render nothing unto God, but only to receive the treasure, which is Jesus Christ, and apprehend him in your heart by faith, although you be never so great a sinner. And so shall you obtain forgiveness of sins, righteousness and eternal happiness ; not as an agent, but as a patient, not by doing, but by receiving. Nothing here cometh betwixt but faith only, apprehending Christ in the promise. This then is perfect righteousness, to hear nothing, to know nothing, to do nothing of the law of works, but only to know and believe that Jesus Christ is now gone to the Father, and sitteth at his right hand, not as a judge, but is made unto you of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Wherefore, as Paul and Silas said to the jailor, so say I unto you, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved : that is, be verily persuaded in your heart, that Jesus Christ is yours, and that you shall have life and salvation by him : that whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, he did it for you.

“ § 3. The warrant to believe. Nomista, (a legalist.) But, Sir, hath such an one as I, any warrant to believe in Christ? Evangelista, I beseech you consider, that God the Father as he is in his Son Jesus Christ, moved with nothing but his free love to mankind lost, hath made a Deed of Gift, and Grant unto them all, that whosoever of them all shall believe in this his Son, shall not perish, but have eternal life. And hence it was that Jesus Christ himself said unto his disciples : Mark xvi.

15, *Go and preach the Gospel to every creature under heaven*: that is, go and tell every man without exception, that here is good news for him, Christ is dead for him, and if he will take him and accept of his righteousness he shall have him. Therefore, saith a godly writer, forasmuch as the holy scripture speaketh to all in general, none of us ought to distrust himself, but believe that it doth belong particularly to himself.

“ § 7. Believers freed from the power of the covenant of works. The truth is, God never speaks to a believer out of Christ; and in Christ he speaks not a word in the terms of the covenant of works. And if the law of itself should presume to come into your conscience, and say, herein and herein thou hast transgressed and broken me; and therefore thou owest so much and so much to divine justice, which must be satisfied, or else I will take hold on thee: then answer you and say, O Law, be it known unto thee that I am now married unto Christ, and so I am under covert; and therefore, if thou charge me with any debt, thou must enter thine action against my husband Christ, for the wife is not sueable at the law, but the husband. But the truth is, I through him am dead to thee, O Law, and thou art dead to me: and therefore justice hath nothing to do with me, for it judgeth according to the law. And if it yet reply and say, aye, but good works must be done, and the commandments must be kept, if thou wilt obtain salvation: then answer you and say, I am already saved before thou camest; therefore I have no need of thy presence, for in Christ I have all things at once; neither need I any thing

more that is necessary to salvation. He is my righteousness, my treasure, and my work. I confess, O Law, that I am neither godly nor righteous: but yet this I am sure of, that he is godly and righteous for me; and to tell the truth, O Law, I am now with him in the bride-chamber, where it maketh no matter what I am, or what I have done; but what Christ, my sweet husband is, hath done, and doth for me; and therefore, leave off, Law, to dispute with me, for by faith I apprehend him who hath apprehended me, and put me into his bosom. Wherefore, I will be bold to bid Moses with his tables, and all lawyers with their books, and all men with their works, hold their peace and give place: so that I say unto thee, O Law, begone; and if it will not begone, then thrust it out by force, saith Luther."

We add an extract from the third chapter. "§ 3. Antinomian objections answered. I know right well Luther on the Galatians, p. 59, saith, the conscience hath nothing to do with the law or works: and that Calvin, in his Instit. p. 403, saith, the consciences of the faithful, when the affiance of their justification before God is to be sought, must raise and advance themselves above the law, and forget the whole righteousness of the law, and lay aside all thinking upon works. Now, for the true understanding of these two worthy servants of Christ, two things are to be considered and concluded. First, That when they speak thus of the law, it is evident they mean only in the case of justification; Secondly, That when the conscience hath to do with the law, in the case of justification, it hath to do with it only as

it is the covenant of works. For as the law is the law of Christ, it neither justifies nor condemns; and so if you understand it of the law as it is the covenant of works, according to their meaning, then it is most true that they say, for why should a man let the law come into his conscience? that is, why should a man make any conscience of doing the law to be justified thereby, considering it is a thing impossible. Nay, what need hath a man to make conscience of doing the law to be justified thereby, when he knows he is already justified another way.

“*Antinomista* (an Antinomian.) But, Sir, if I forget not, Musculus saith, that the law is utterly abrogated.

“*Evan.* Indeed Musculus, speaking of the Ten Commandments, saith, if they be weak, if they be the letter, if they do work transgression, anger, curse, and death; and if Christ, by the law of the spirit of life, delivered them that believed in him from the law of the letter, which was weak to justify, and strong to condemn, and from the curse, being made a curse for us, surely they be abrogated. Now this is most certain, that the Ten Commandments do no way work transgression, anger, curse, and death, but only as they are the covenant of works. Neither hath Christ delivered believers ANY OTHERWISE from them than as they are the covenant of works. And, therefore, we may assuredly conclude that they are no otherwise abrogated than as they are the covenant of works. A Christian man doing against those things which be commanded in the Decalogue, doth sin more outrageously than he that should so do, being under the law, so far off is he from being free from those things that be there commanded.”

The Marrow, from which these quotations are taken, was originally published in England in 1646, during the sitting of the Westminster Assembly and was warmly recommended by several distinguished members of that body. Being exceedingly popular, it passed through numerous editions; but, notwithstanding its circulation in the south, it seems to have been but little known in Scotland, till, falling into the hands of Boston and his associates, who were delighted with its evangelical strain, it was republished by them in 1718, with a commendatory preface by the Rev. James Hog of Carnock, a man of pre-eminent piety and attainments. "The motion of a new impression (says he in his preface) fell in as a native result from desires of more light, excited by the Spirit of truth in the hearts of wisdom's children, and some of these endowed with learning as well as piety. It contains a great deal of the marrow of revealed and gospel truth, selected from authors of great note, clearly enlightened, and of most digested experience." "Touching the matter, it is of the greatest concernment, namely, the stating aright both law and gospel, and giving true and clear narrations of the course of the cloud of witnesses, in the following of which many have arrived at a glorious rest. The excellent accounts are managed in such a manner as to detect the rocks on either hand upon which the danger of splitting is exceedingly great. Here we have the greatest depths and most painted delusions of hell, in opposition to the only way of salvation, discovered with marvellous brevity and evidence, and that by the concurring suffrages of burning and shining lights, men of the clearest ex-

perience, and honoured of God to do eminent service in their day, for advancing the interest of our Lord's kingdom and gospel." On its being thus introduced to public notice in this country, no ordinary commotion ensued. Mr Hog, who had previously distinguished himself by his advocacy of the doctrines of grace, was vehemently assailed. To silence the clamour he published "An Explication of the Passages excepted against in the Marrow," an explication which it is impossible to read without admiring its calm reasoning, its judicious statements, its earnest tone, and its christian temper. It did not, however, suffice to allay the storm, which grew gradually fiercer, chiefly in consequence of the interference of Principal Hadow of St Andrews, the earliest and most unrelenting opponent of the Marrow. The Principal's first attack upon it was made in a sermon, preached before the Synod of Fife, and published by request, entitled "The Record of God and Duty of Faith therein Required," his text being 1 John v. 11 and 12, which sermon was followed up by other pieces, such as "The Snake in the Grass," &c., productions which bear incontestible marks of having proceeded from his pen. Nor are they without their merits. By no means contemptible in argument, Principal Hadow could appreciate the nice distinctions on which the truth or falsehood of a system so often turns, and was a better divine than the majority of his supporters. He appears, however, to have laboured under strong personal dislike to Mr Hog, which is supposed to have grown out of some offence given to him while they were both students in Holland, under the influence of

which he was led to misrepresent Mr Hog, and the book which he recommended,—the account Principal Hadow gives of the Marrow, in the Appendix to his Synod Sermon, being a specimen of as gross and uncandid misrepresentation as the history of theological controversy affords. As was to be expected from the Principal's interference, the Marrow question began to attract more than ever the public attention, and soon awakened an interest which alarmed the Assembly itself. No mention, however, appears to have been formally made of the subject at the meeting of the Assembly in 1719, but it was sufficiently understood that the Marrow was aimed at, in the instructions given to the Commission requiring them to ascertain "how the prohibition has been observed in the bounds of the Presbytery of Auchterarder or elsewhere, whereby the using of the proposition remitted by that Presbytery, and condemned by the General Assembly, 1717, was discharged; and to inquire into the publishing and spreading of books and pamphlets tending to the diffusing of that condemned proposition, and promoting a scheme of opinions relative thereto, which are inconsistent with our Confession of Faith; and that the recommenders of such books and pamphlets, or the errors therein contained, whether by write or print, be called before them to answer for their conduct in such recommendations." Having received these instructions, the Commission were not slow to act upon them. They forthwith appointed a committee for "Purity of Doctrine," which was divided into two sections, the one to meet at St Andrews, and the other at Edinburgh.—the

former undertaking "to ripen the affair," and to fix upon the things to be condemned, and the persons to be summoned; and the latter to conduct the examinations. Four ministers were called to appear at Edinburgh,—the Rev. Messrs Warden of Gargunock, Brisbane of Stirling, Hamilton of Airth, and Hog of Carnock, who, although they felt the procedure to be irregular, submitted to it. Mr Warden was examined concerning a treatise he had published on the Ordinance of the Supper: Mr Brisbane respecting a sermon he had preached on Romans vi. and 14th, in which he inculcated sentiments in harmony with the Auchterarder proposition; Mr Hamilton upon his Catechism, in one part of which he declared that in the death of Christ there is "not only an absolute and intrinsic sufficiency flowing from the divinity of the person of Christ, being God as well as man, but a federal and legal sufficiency, flowing from the fulness of the satisfaction given to the law and the lawgiver, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, and the nature and will of God requiring and appointing the same;" in which Catechism also, he declared "that he humbly conceives this intrinsic, federal, material sufficiency must at least be intended by these general expressions, namely,—Christ giving himself a ransom for all,—tasting death for every man,—and being a propitiation for the sins of the whole world." Mr Hog, the last of the four ministers, was interrogated as to his connexion with the Marrow, when he acknowledged himself to be the author of the preface, and stated that the book had come most unexpectedly into his hands, that the idea of reprinting it had



been suggested to him by others, and that "he had received more light about some important concerns of the glorious gospel, by perusing that book, than by any other human writings which providence had brought into his hands."\*

The committee were upon the whole satisfied, and gave the suspected brethren reason to hope the best from their report, at the same time stating, that they reserved the right of making still farther inquiries if necessary. Here the matter might have rested but for the agitation kept up by the publication of pamphlets, and frequent Presbyterial and Synodical debates, the Synod of Fife, before which Mr Hog was repeatedly sisted, contributing, in an eminent degree, to prolong the strife. The approaching Assembly in May 1720, was in consequence looked forward to with more than ordinary interest. To it the Edinburgh section of the Committee for Purity of Doctrine gave in their report respecting the four brethren they had examined, stating, "that they were pleased to hear them explain themselves upon sundry points," but adding, "that there were other things which required to be further considered." Besides the above, the Committee gave in another report, in the shape of an overture, bearing particularly on the Marrow of Modern Divinity, and containing a number of passages taken from the book, which were alleged to be contrary to the Scriptures and the Standards. The passages extracted were classified thus:—The nature of faith—Universal atonement and pardon—Holiness not necessary to

\* Boston's Memoirs.

salvation—Fear of punishment, and hope of reward, not allowed to be motives of a believer's obedience —The believer not under the law as a rule of life. Then followed six Antinomian paradoxes:—1. A believer is not under the law, but is altogether delivered from it. 2. A believer doth not commit sin. 3. The Lord can see no sin in a believer. 4. The Lord is not angry with a believer for his sins. 5. The Lord doth not chasten a believer for his sins. 6. A believer hath no cause either to confess his sins, or to crave pardon at the hand of God for them, either to fast, or mourn, or humble himself before the Lord for them. These, and certain expressions selected from various parts of the Marrow, were laid before the Assembly; and along with them were exhibited those texts of Scripture and articles of the Confession of Faith and Catechisms, to which these positions were said to be opposed. The whole being read, it was agreed that the matter should be considered in a committee of the whole house, and that ministers present, whether members of the Assembly or not, should be at liberty to express their sentiments, a privilege of which Mr Hog availed himself. From a manuscript left by Mr Hog, it appears that the friends of the Marrow maintained that the book was undoubtedly orthodox, and ought not to be proscribed because of some, it might be, not very happy expressions; that "many paradoxes and harsh expressions liable to misconstruction, when taken separately, were to be found in authors of uncontested orthodoxy and eminence, both old and late, and that the excellent meaning had hitherto procured an overlooking of such flights;" and more-

over, that the passages objected to, as containing certain supposed errors, should be viewed in connexion with other passages in the book, in which these errors were distinctly condemned. But this was a mode of reasoning, Mr Hog informs us, which the Assembly would not listen to; and the result was, the introduction and passing of an overture condemning the Marrow under the five separate heads of doctrine already mentioned, and prohibiting "all the ministers of the Church, either by preaching, writing, or printing, to recommend the said book, or in discourse to say anything in favour of it; but, on the contrary, to warn and exhort their people, in whose hands the said book is or may come, not to read or use the same."

This deliverance, which might have been expected from the Vatican of Rome rather than the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, was severely felt by the friends of the Marrow, who conceived "that, under colour of condemning the said book, several important and precious truths were deeply wounded, and the purity of doctrine contained in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms obscured and perverted."

The blow thus inflicted on the doctrines of grace, was immediately succeeded by a second summons to Mr Hamilton of Airth, to appear before the Committee for Purity of Doctrine. On this occasion, a great many queries were put to him, relating to the extent of Christ's death,—the conditionality of the covenant of grace,—the nature of faith,—and the precepts of the gospel, to all of which he returned satisfactory answers. The conduct of the committee, Mr Hamilton informs us, in the account he

has given of this examination, was calm, and not uncourteous ; but " I confess (says this good minister of Jesus Christ) when they were putting some queries to me which insinuated great suspicion of gross errors, and others that I thought grated much upon special gospel truths, my heart grew so great that I could scarce utter a word without a flood of tears, for which I craved their pardon, and told them it was my infirmity which I could not help, and some of themselves were so affected that they teared also."

A similar scrutiny awaited others, had not prudence whispered the adoption of milder measures. The Act condemning the Marrow was creating a wider and deeper dissatisfaction than had been at all anticipated, and threatened to involve the Church in serious trouble. Boston, whose name is now a household word, and who was one of the foremost of the noble band, who at this period fearlessly braved the opposition of the Assembly in the cause of truth, was extremely desirous to have the Act of 1720 rescinded ; and with this view along with the Rev. George Byres of Lessudden, the Rev. Gabriel Wilson of Maxton, and the Rev. Henry Davidson of Galashiels, he brought the subject before the Presbytery of Selkirk, and afterwards before the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale. Here, however, he experienced nothing but discouragement. With downcast spirits, he returned from the Synod in company with Messrs Wilson and Davidson, but as they talked by the way, their hearts burned within them, and the idea having suggested itself of united effort among the friends of evangelical doctrine,

Boston seized it at once, wrote without delay to Mr Hog, who in turn communicated with others. The result, in the first instance was, Messrs Hog, Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, Bathgate, and Wardlaw, prepared the draught of a Representation to the General Assembly; but the brethren in the South, not being fully satisfied with it, Boston drew up another, which was transmitted to Fife, and a meeting was appointed to be held at Edinburgh in the house of Mr William Wardrobe, apothecary, "a public spirited Christian in these times." There were present at this meeting the Rev. J. Kid, Queensferry; E. Erskine, Portmoak; R. Erskine, and J. Wardlaw, Dunfermline; W. Wilson, Perth; J. Bathgate, Orwell; H. Davidson, Galashiels; G. Wilson, Maxton; and T. Boston, Ettrick. "The first meeting (says Boston) was spent mostly in prayer: and the Lord was with us at that and other following ones. We went through the Act of Assembly in order, showing what was in it stumbling to us, and conferring thereon. In these meetings, two things were observable. One was, that no debate was kept upon selfish motives, but each one was ready to yield to Scripture and reason, by whomsoever advanced. Another, that when we stuck and could not get forward, but were in hazard of falling asunder, Providence still interposed seasonably, causing something to be cast up, which cleared our way and joined us. And it was agreed that there should be a Representation to the Assembly about it; the forming whereof was committed to Mr Ebenezer Erskine, with whom our draught was lodged for that effect; and the revising

of it when formed, was committed to the brethren in that country. And another meeting was appointed to be in the latter end of March, in the same place.

“From this meeting Mr Wilson of Perth, and Mr Ebenezer Erskine, were absent. Mr Sethrum, minister at Gladsmuir, was with us at one or two diets, but staid not. Mr Hog’s absence was thought expedient by some of ourselves, because of his particular interest, he having writ the preface to the Marrow. Messrs Hamilton at Airth ; Brisbane and Muir, at Stirling ; and Warden at Gargunnock, though invited, came not, to our great discouragement. Then the draught of the Representation sent us from the South, after several alterations and additions made thereon was signed by all there present. And the next meeting was appointed to be the first night of the Assembly’s meeting in May : and it was designed for prayer : but in regard of my circumstances, I was allowed not to come in till the Monday after the Assembly’s sitting down.

“The first night of the Assembly the meeting was in the same house again, accordingly ; and Providence so ordering that I was chosen a member of that Assembly, I met with them. Mr James Hog, whose absence hitherto had been judged expedient, in regard of his prefacing the Marrow, did join us. Moreover there came into us a goodly company of brethren, with whose appearance I was much encouraged. But behold ! they turned our meeting, designed for prayer, into a meeting for disputing, jangling, and breaking our measures : in the which, the main agent was Mr John Warden above mentioned ; and next Mr Moncrieff of Culfargie. Two

things they mainly insisted on, besides picking quarrels with the Representation. One was a conference with the leading men before any thing should be done ; the other, that all should not subscribe, but only some few, the rest being reserved for managing, judging, and voting in the Assembly. This last none of us who had already subscribed could go into. I was brought to yield to the first, together with Mr Bathgate, on condition, that the time of giving in our Representation should not be cut off. But when it came about to my two friends,\* they, smelling the unfair design that I had no dread of, that was stopped, as not to be yielded to. It was good Providence, that their unfair dealing could not blind us all, else we had in 'all appearance been ensnared and mired. Thus the whole weary night was spent, till day-light, that they left us in much worse case than they found us. Thus left of our new friends, it was proposed by Mr Kid to drop the things quarrelled by them in the Representation ; among which was an entire head, namely, that of the fear of hell : and this, that our brethren might be obliged to stand by us in the Assembly. In this step, unhappily gone into, we took the way of carnal policy ; and I liked it not, but could not oppose it, because I had drawn the paper. However, our politics, in the just judgment of God, failed us. The Representation being transcribed accordingly, was signed by the twelve brethren, as in the printed copy, and was that same day, in the afternoon, given in by us to the committee of bills, Mr Kid present-

\* Messrs G. Wilson and Davidson.

ing it, being a man of singular boldness. This haste was made, to prevent our being teased anew, as the night before. Mr John Bonar, who lodged in Mr Wardrobe's, where we had our meetings, after signing it with us, went away home : and I do not remember his appearing with us afterwards, if it was not once, at which time he was called home by an express. Mr John Williamson of Inveresk made his first appearance amongst us at signing of this last draught : but was very useful after, being a man of a clear head, a ready wit, and very forward. Mr William Hunter at Lilliesleaf, signed it in the church, just before it was presented."\*

Such is the account given by Boston of the meetings connected with the getting up of the Representation to the Assembly, of which the following is a copy :—

" To the Right Reverend the Moderator and remanent Reverend and Honourable Members of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY, met at Edinburgh, the 11th day of May, 1721,—

" The REPRESENTATION and PETITION of us under-subscribing, Ministers of the Gospel,

" HUMBLY SHOWETH,

" THAT whereas it is the unquestionable duty of all the members, ministers, and assemblies of this church, to endeavour in their several capacities the preservation of the purity of doctrine contained in the holy Scriptures, and in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, agreeable thereunto, that the same may be faithfully transmitted to succeeding generations : We find ourselves obliged in conscience, with all due deference, to lay some things relative to that and some other matters which are grievous to us, before the venerable Assembly, whose province it is, in a special manner, to maintain the truths of the gospel, and to take care that every thing in the house of the God of heaven be moulded in a conformity to his will, and the pattern he hath showed us in his holy word.

\* Boston's Memoirs.



" We are fully persuaded, That although the grace of God which bringeth salvation, teacheth us, ' that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;' yet there is such a propensity in the corrupt nature of man to licentiousness and profanity, that he is apt to turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness; whence have proceeded these monstrous opinions of some,—that the law is not a rule of life to believers,—that holiness is not necessary to salvation,—and the like; all which our hearts do abhor, as egregious blasphemy against our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, making him the minister of sin: And therefore we cannot but own it to be commendable zeal in the members, ministers, and Assemblies of this Church, to endeavour the stifling of such monstrous brats in the birth, whensoever they do really begin to appear.

" But withal, on the other hand, we are no less persuaded, that in point of seeking righteousness and salvation, there is such a bias in the same corrupt nature towards the old way of the first covenant, that men seek the same naturally not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: the which bias of the heart of man in opposition to the gospel-doctrine, known only by a new revelation after the fall, being more subtle, and not so easily discerned as the other, which is opposite to the law, the knowledge of which was impressed on man's mind in creation; there is an evident necessity of guarding equally at least against the latter as against the former, lest the purity of gospel-doctrine suffer, and man frustrate the grace of God, seeking righteousness by the law. And since we do apprehend that the late General Assembly of this Church has not sufficiently adverted to the danger on that side, but that by their act entitled, ' Act concerning a book, entitled, the Marrow of Modern Divinity,' dated at Edinburgh, May 20th, 1720, gospel-truth has suffered, and it is likely will suffer more in the rising and succeeding generations, unless a remedy be timely provided; we beg leave, with all humility and deference, to lay before this venerable Assembly, some (of the many) things which in the said act are stumbling to us, and many others in this church.

" And, First, It is surprising, and exceedingly grievous unto us, that by the said act the following position is condemned; namely, ' That as the law is the covenant of works, believers are altogether and wholly set free from it; set free, both from the commanding and condemning power of the covenant of works.' We acknowledge and profess, we look upon our freedom, as

believers in Christ, from the covenant of works, or the law as that covenant, to be the chief branch of that precious liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and in which the eternal salvation of our souls is wrapt up. We know no commands of the covenant of works, but that command of perfect obedience, under the pain of the curse. And if the law as to believers be divested of its promise of life and threatening of death, (which superadded to its commands made it a covenant of works,) as it really is, since they are not under it to be thereby justified or condemned, we cannot comprehend how it continues any longer to be a covenant of works to them, or such as to have a commanding power over them, that covenant-form of it being done away in Christ with respect to believers. And to suppose that a man cannot be under the law as a rule of life, unless he be under the covenant of works, which the act above specified plainly imports, is contrary to our Confession of Faith, chap. 19, sect. 6, and Larg. Cat. quest. anent 'the use of the moral law to the regenerate,' which bear, 'That although believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, yet it is of use to them as a rule of life, or as the rule of their obedience.'

"SECONDLY, Of the same dismal tendency we apprehend to be, the declaring of that distinction of the law as it is the law of works, and as it is the law of Christ, as the author applies it, pages 198, 199, to be altogether groundless. We find the author doth there apply this distinction, so as to show that believers are not under the law, as it is the law of works, though under the law, as it is the law of Christ. And he tells us in express words, page 6, That the law of works is as much as to say, the covenant of works, the which covenant (saith he) the Lord made with all mankind in Adam before his fall. To what purpose then can this distinction thus applied be rejected, and declared altogether groundless, but to stake down believers under the covenant of works, as in the former head, and contrary to the great design of the gospel-contrivance, to direct them to an obedience upon which they may boast, since by the 'law of works boasting is not excluded? It were much to be desired, that another method had been taken to expose the Antinomian paradoxes, viz., 'That a believer doth not commit sin,—the Lord can see no sin in a believer,' and the like, than by condemning the distinction of the law above mentioned as applied by the author, to assert in effect, that believers sin against the law, (or covenant of works,) while in the meantime, according to the holy Scriptures and our Confession of Faith,

they are not under it. Which exemption we are fully satisfied, carrieth no prejudice unto the indispensable obligation of the creature to the strictest obedience, flowing from the unalterable authority of the Lawgiver, and the nature of the precepts themselves. Nevertheless we firmly believe, that no small portion of the believer's safety and comfort turns upon these following points;—namely, That the guilt of believers' sins, is not such as the guilt of their sins who are under the covenant of works;—that God doth not look upon the sins of believers after their union with Christ, as breaches of the covenant of works;—that when, in his anger against them for their sins, he smites them, yet he doth not proceed against them in the way of that covenant, and that in their confessions, and addresses for pardon, fastings, mournings, and humiliations, they ought to eye him as their Father in Jesus Christ, and not as their wrathful Judge, proceeding against them according to the law (or covenant) of works. All which truths seem to us to be buried in the ruins of the above-mentioned distinction of the law as applied by the author of the Marrow.

“THIRDLY, It is astonishing to us to find, that part of the Marrow, which lies from page 150 to 153, condemned in *cumulo*, as contrary to the Scriptures and Confession of Faith; while we must frankly own, if we understand the gospel, the fore-cited pages contain a bundle of sweet and pleasant gospel-truths, which, instead of slackening people's diligence in the study of holiness, as is alleged in the act, do discover the true spring of evangelical obedience to the holy law as a rule; particularly in the Assembly's act, we find the believer's plea, in the case of justification in answer to the demands of the law, cut off and condemned; viz. ‘I am already saved before thou camest, therefore I have no need of thy presence.’ (Here the book adds, what the Assembly's act omits, namely,) ‘For in Christ I have all things at once, neither need I any thing more that is necessary unto salvation.’ Then proceeds, ‘Christ is my righteousness, my treasure, and my work. I confess, O Law, that I am neither godly nor righteous; but yet this I am sure of, that he is godly and righteous for me.’ In which terms that blessed and famous reformer, MARTIN LUTHER, in his strenuous and courageous defence of the evangelical doctrine of justification, asserted the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus as our Surety, to be the only righteousness upon which we may rely in the case of justification before God: The which, that great champion for Jesus Christ maintained against the Antichristian world with astonish-

ing success in his time. We do believe, That the law or covenant of works, being broken, had a two-fold demand upon all mankind; without a valid answer to each of which, sustained by the Judge of all the earth, no man can see the Lord:—the one, the demand of satisfaction to justice for sin;—the other, the demand of obedience. And as we have no plea in answer to its former demand, but the sufferings of Jesus Christ our Surety; so we have none, we dare pretend none, in answer to the latter demand of it, but that which stands here condemned; in regard that as, in the language of the law, there is no obtaining of salvation but by works, (for the law is not of faith, but the man that doth them shall live in them,) so it acknowledgeth no good works, no keeping of the commandments, no godliness nor righteousness, but what is every way perfect. And we conceive, that believers being united to Christ, this their plea is sustained in the court of heaven, as the plea of the Surety's having paid the debt for them, whereby the demand which the law makes upon them for works, if they will obtain salvation, is cut off, they being appointed to obtain salvation another way, namely, by our Lord Jesus Christ: Yea, being already actually, though not completely saved, not according to the works of righteousness which they have done, but according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; of which salvation, conferred on them through Jesus Christ our Saviour, their deliverance from the law as a covenant of works, and consequently from its demands aforesaid, is a chief part.

“FOURTHLY, With respect to the passages concerning the nature of faith condemned by the foresaid act:—

“1. It is grievous to us, that thereby that act of faith, by which a person appropriates to himself what before lay in common in the gospel-offer, and without which there can be no receiving and closing with Christ for salvation, is in effect excluded from the nature of faith, which, as we apprehend, is thereby turned into that general and doubtful faith abjured in our national covenant.

“2. Whereas it is notour, that our first reformers, and the body of reformed divines since, have taught concerning the nature of faith, in the same strain as in the condemned passages, and thereby cut the sinews of Popery; which doctrine of theirs, in the same manner of expression, stands in the Confessions of our Reformed Churches, and in the public standards of doctrine in this Church, before 1647, such as Confession 1560, the Helvetian Confession, received and approved by this Church, with

exception only to holidays; CALVIN'S Catechism, which was commonly annexed to KNOX'S Liturgy; Mr JOHN DAVIDSON'S Catechism, approved and recommended by the Synod of Lothian and Tweedale, anno 1599; as also, that little Latin Catechism annexed to the Rudiments so long taught in Scotland; the famous and learned Mr BOYD of Trochrig's Commentary upon the Ephesians, a work promoted and encouraged by the Assembly of the Church of Scotland. It seems to us no small disservice to the interest of religion, and a handle given the Papists against the Reformation, that by an act of a General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, that doctrine, or way of expressing it, is now condemned. And although we freely own, that in latter times saving faith has been well described, especially in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and the manner of speaking on that head is much altered from what some time was in use, yet we doubt not but the substance of the doctrine in that point is still the same, as will appear by comparing the above-mentioned Confession and Catechisms, with the three acts of Assembly, 1647 and 1648, receiving and approving the Westminster Confession and Catechisms; in which it is expressly declared, 'That the said Confessions and Catechisms are in nothing contrary to the received doctrine of this Church;' which they would not have said, if they had not thought, that receiving and resting in Christ for salvation did imply that assurance, whereby they ordinarily described before that time, and by which they understood, the fiducial act or appropriating persuasion of faith; and not that assurance treated of in the Westminster Confession, which is a complex one, full and clear, containing not only the assurance included in the direct act of faith, but also that which ariseth from spiritual sensation, and rational argumentation; for which see Confess. chap. 18, § 2, 3, where it is said, 'That the assurance of which they treat, is not only founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, but also the inward evidences of these graces, unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits, that we are the children of God.—This infallible assurance (adds the Confession) doth not so belong to the essence of faith,' &c. And therefore we are fully persuaded, that the late Assembly had done more acceptable services to God, to this and other reformed churches, had they discovered the real agreement between the more ancient and modern way of describing faith, than to condemn the former as erroneous; whereby a heavy charge is laid upon our reformers, this and

other reformed churches, who generally have defined faith by assurance.

"FIFTHLY, That the following passage is condemned, viz. 'The Father hath made a deed of gift and grant unto all mankind, that whosoever of them shall believe in his Son, shall not perish,' is surprising to us; when in the condemned passage itself, extracted forth of the sacred records, we read that deed of gift and grant, by which we understand no more but the revelation of the divine will in the word, affording a warrant to offer Christ to all, and a warrant unto all to receive him. This treatment of the said passage seems to encroach upon the warrants aforesaid, and also upon sovereign grace, which hath made this grant, not to devils, but unto men, in terms than which none can be imagined more extensive.

"Waiving the consideration of the expressions, judged by the Assembly exceeding harsh and offensive; since that which hath extorted this representation from us, is our concern for the truth, more than the manner of expressing it,—yet, seeing the interest of truth and of that condemned book, are so much linked together, in this event, we cannot but represent briefly, the hard treatment we conceive this last to have also met with, when under the consideration of the late General Assembly; and such we apprehend to be,

"1. The heavy charge of maintaining, That the believer is not under the law, as a rule of life, which is inferred from the author's asserting the believers to be free from the law, as it is a covenant of works, as if the law could not be a rule of life, but as it is the covenant of works. One would rather think, that the foresaid assertion of the author, doth plainly import the believer to be under the law in some other sense; and justice as well as charity obliges us to conceive the said other sense to be, that of the law as a rule of life; forasmuch as, in express terms, he hath declared the ten commandments to be the rule of life to a believer, page 5.

"2. The charge of maintaining holiness not to be necessary to salvation, is fixed upon the author's teaching the believer to plead the obedience of Christ, in answer to the law's demand of good works for obtaining salvation, of which before: and upon his proposing his own judgment very modestly, as to the propriety of expression, with respect to the relation between good works and eternal happiness, in these words, viz. 'So that good works, as I conceive, may rather be called a believer's walking in the way of eternal happiness, than the way itself.' But how

that doctrine can bear that inference, that holiness is not necessary to salvation, or how it tends to slacken people's diligence in the study of holiness, we cannot comprehend: for we can never grant, that the believer's walking in the way of eternal happiness is not necessary to salvation, and that only the way itself is so. And yet, after all, the author doth not tenaciously insist on his own judgment aforesaid; as to the propriety of expression; but immediately adds, 'But, however, this we may assuredly conclude, that the sum and substance, both of the way and of walking in the way, consist in the receiving of Jesus Christ by faith, and in yielding obedience to his law.'

"3. Fear of punishment and hope of reward, not allowed to be motives of a believer's obedience, is inferred from this, that the author would not have believers to eschew evil and do good, for fear of hell or hope of heaven; as if hell only, and none of the fearful tokens of God's anger against his own children in this life, were to be in any sort reckoned punishments; and heaven only, but none of the sweet tokens of his love bestowed upon them in the way of close walking with God, were to be reckoned rewards. We shall only add here, that forasmuch as it is evident to us from the author's words, page 183, relative to the hope of heaven above mentioned, that he understands by doing good for hope of heaven, the doing it for hope of obtaining it by our own works and doings, we heartily approve of his position above specified, in that sense.

"4. We cannot but account it hard, that whereas there are in the act about 27 quotations out of the book, they are all condemned, without condescending upon the words or propositions which the Assembly aims at in the quoted passages; for verifying of which we refer to the act itself: yea, so far as we can find, there are several of these quotations which seem to us to contain nothing of what is charged upon them, as particularly upon the first head anent the nature of faith, pages 175, 176, 177. And upon the head of universal atonement, pages 127, 128. And upon the fifth head, anent the believer's not being under the law as a rule of life, pages 209, 210.

"5. It is also hard, that the book is condemned as denying the necessity of holiness to salvation, and the believer's being under the law as a rule of life, without making the least intimation, that the one half of the said book, contained in the second volume, is an explication and application of the holy law, in its ten commandments, not only to unbelievers, but also to believers themselves, for their direction and excitation to holiness of heart

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and life, and humiliation for their transgressions of it; yea, and without that half of the book being once under the consideration, either of the Assembly or Committee for preserving purity of doctrine.

*" Right Reverend and Honourable,*

" Although we do not account of the deed of the late Assembly in this affair, otherwise than as an oversight, nevertheless, our hearts tremble to think of its native consequences, and what use in the present and succeeding generations may be made of the words of the Assembly's determination, in the points of doctrine above mentioned, and of their strictly prohibiting and discharging all the ministers of this church, either by preaching, writing, or printing, to recommend the foressaid book: And, on the contrary, enjoining and requiring them to warn and exhort their people in whose hands the said book is, or may come, not to read or use the same: A book remarkable for setting the difference between the law and the gospel, the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, in a clear light; and for directing to the true way of attaining gospel-holiness, by which it has recommended itself to the consciences of many judicious ministers and Christians in this Church, holy and tender in their walk.

" As the growing humour in this generation, for turning that religion left among us into a mere morality, which hath nothing but the matter common to it, with true holiness and gospel obedience, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, is too notour to escape your observation, so it is, with grief of heart we must say, that we conceive the above mentioned act of Assembly to have so opened the sluice to it, that if remedy be not timely provided, this matter must terminate in a confounding of the law and gospel, notwithstanding of our Confession of Faith and Catechisms witnessing against the same; which has been the lot of other public standards of doctrine before this time.

" We are confirmed in these our fears of the dismal effects of that act, when we find in a following act of the same Assembly, namely, the 8th, entitled, ' Act for preaching catechetical doctrine, with directions therein,' two clauses, the one relating to justification, the other to the necessity of holiness, being expressed in the terms following, viz. ' Of free justification, through our blessed Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ, received by faith alone; and of the necessity of an holy life, in order to the obtaining of everlasting happiness: ' Concerning which we crave leave to represent, that the said form of words, being another



than what is used in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms on these subjects, is stumbling to us, and cannot fail of being so to many in the present situation of affairs with respect to doctrine in this church, caused by the former act, for binding on the necks of believers in Christ the yoke of the law, as a covenant of works; the ministers of this church had been directed to preach free justification through our blessed Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ, 'only for his righteousness imputed to us, and received by faith alone,' the ground of offence on the former head had been lessened: But that in such a circumstantiate case, the great doctrine of justification was winded up in such terms, as gave shelter to the erroneous doctrine of justification for something wrought in, or done by, the sinner, as his righteousness, or keeping of the new and gospel law, is exceedingly grievous; especially considering, that a motion expressly made to the Assembly, for mentioning the righteousness of Christ in that case, was slighted. And whereas the said Assembly, by their former act, have condemned the above mentioned plea, in answer to the law's demand of good works for obtaining salvation, and that the law acknowledgeth no works for obtaining salvation, but such as found a title to it before the Lord; we conceive their directing of ministers by the latter act above mentioned, to preach (evidently in contradiction to the condemned doctrine of the Marrow on that head) the necessity of a holy life in order to the obtaining of everlasting happiness, to be of very dangerous consequence to the doctrine of free grace. And in our humble opinion, the receding from that doctrine may be reckoned among the causes of, and as having no small influence upon, the want of the gospel-holiness, so much and so deservedly complained of by the ministers and people in these our unhappy days.

"For brevity's sake, we do not here represent several other grievances, important in themselves, and weighty to us; yet we cannot but regret the flame raised in this church by the overtures concerning kirk sessions and presbyteries, transmitted by the late Assembly: nor can we, without horror, think of the further evils and inconveniences that will inevitably follow, in case they should be turned into standing acts. But it is hoped this Assembly will be so guided by the great Master of Assemblies, as to put a stop to what further detriment the Church of Scotland may sustain by the said overtures; as also, effectually to prevent for the future, all grounds of complaint that may be made to subsequent Assemblies, against the proceedings of such

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as have gone before them, and consequently to cut off all occasion for representations of this nature hereafter.

"MAY it therefore please the very Reverend Assembly, seriously and impartially to consider the premises, with the great weight and importance of this affair, in which the honour of our common Master and message, the salvation of souls, our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, our covenants, national and solemn league, and the remains of the peace of this Church, are so much concerned: And laying aside all considerations of another kind, repeal the 5th act of the late Assembly, entitled, 'Act concerning a book, entitled, The Marrow of Modern Divinity:' And to provide such remedy as may remove the offence arising from the two above specified clauses, in the 8th act of the said Assembly, entitled, 'Act for preaching Catechetical Doctrine, with directions therein:' Which will afford matter of thanksgiving unto God, in behalf of the truth, and of yourselves, to many who love the truth and peace.

(Signed) "Rev. James Hog, Carnock.

Thomas Boston, Ettrick.

John Bonar, Torphichen.

John Williamson, Inveresk & Musselburgh.

James Kid, Queensferry.

Gabriel Wilson, Maxton.

Ebenezer Erskine, Portmoak.

Ralph Erskine, Dunfermline.

James Wardlaw, do.

Henry Davidson, Galashiels.

James Bathgate, Orwell.

William Hunter, Lilliesleaf."

This Representation, subscribed by the above twelve, much to be honoured names, would have come before the assembly of 1721, but for its speedy dissolution, in consequence of the sudden indisposition of the King's Commissioner. It was, however, handed over to the Commission, and taken up by them without delay. Being read, it was briefly supported by Mr Hog, who was followed by Principal

Hadow and his party, in speeches evidently prepared for the occasion. Members having spoken their sentiments, Boston and Ebenezer Erskine were heard as Representatives, together with Messrs Williamson and Wilson. The two latter declined entering at length without preparation, into a reply to the numerous and elaborately written speeches that were delivered ; but they found an opportunity of expressing themselves fully, in a committee which met on the following day to discuss the matter. In this committee the Marrow-men acquitted themselves ably. " Kind providence so ordered it (says Boston) that the career they were on the day before, was through the divine mercy, stopped to conviction, at that and the following meetings. Particularly Mr Williamson did, in a point in debate, fairly lay Mr Allan Logan, minister of Culross ; and I was encouraged by the success of an encounter with Principal Hadow."\*

This committee having reported to the Commission, another committee was appointed to prepare a vindication of the Act of Assembly, complained of by the Representatives, to be submitted to the Commission in August, at which the Representatives were instructed to appear. The vindication being at length produced, it was, after long debate, adopted as an overture to be transmitted to the Assembly. The Representatives, who were not present during the discussion, being called to appear, were informed of the result, and warned to attend the Commission in November. They accordingly did so, but were taken completely

\* Boston's Memoirs.

by surprise by a somewhat novel mode of procedure, the following twelve queries being proposed to them :—

I. Whether are there any precepts in the gospel that were not actually given before the gospel was revealed?

II. Is not the believer now bound, by the authority of the Creator, to personal obedience to the moral law, though not in order to justification?

III. Doth the annexing of a promise of life and a threatening of death to a precept, make it a covenant of works?

IV. If the moral law, antecedent to its receiving the form of a covenant of works, had a threatening of hell annexed to it?

V. If it be peculiar to believers to be free of the commanding power of the law as a covenant of works?

VI. If a sinner, being justified, has all things at once that is necessary for salvation? And if personal holiness, and progress in holy obedience, is not necessary to a justified person's possession of glory, in case of his continuing in life after his justification?

VII. Is preaching the necessity of a holy life, in order to the obtaining of eternal happiness, of dangerous consequence to the doctrine of free grace?

VIII. Is knowledge, belief and persuasion, that Christ died for me, and that he is mine, and that whatever he did and suffered, he suffered for me, the direct act of faith, whereby a sinner is united to Christ, interested in him, instated in God's covenant of grace? Or is that knowledge or persuasion in-

cluded in the very essence of that justifying act of faith?

IX. What is that act of faith by which a sinner appropriates Christ and his saving benefits to himself?

X. Whether the revelation of the divine will in the word, affording a warrant to offer Christ unto all, and a warrant to all to receive him, can be said to be the Father's making a Deed of Gift and Grant unto all mankind? Is this Grant made to all mankind by sovereign grace? And whether is it absolute or conditional?

XI. Is the division of the law, as explained and applied in the Marrow, to be justified; and which cannot be rejected without burying several gospel truths?

XII. Is the hope of heaven, and fear of hell, to be excluded from the motives of believers' obedience? And if not, how can the Marrow be defended, that expressly excludes them, though it should allow other motives?

These queries the Representatives did not reckon themselves bound to answer. Boston, however, was strongly in favour of giving them a reply. "What determined me to this was," says he, "that I thought we were to lay our account with parting with our brethren, as being cast out by them; and in that event, it would be safest, both for the cause of truth and our own reputation." \* Accordingly, the Representatives judged it expedient "for the sake of truth,

\* Boston's Memoirs.

and to take off any shadow of suspicion, though never so groundless, and being neither afraid nor ashamed to bring to light their sentiments on these points, in the form of answers to these queries, as well as they had already done in their Representation; to condescend to take them under their consideration, and to give answers thereto against the Commission in March; withal protesting, that this their condescension should not be constructed an approbation of this method of proceeding, nor be improven as a precedent." \*

The questions, so unexpectedly proposed, were taken chiefly from "The Antinomianism of the Marrow of Modern Divinity Detected," the production of the Principal of St Andrews, who has been justly described by Boston, as "the spring of that black Act of Assembly," 1720. The answers were drawn up by Ebenezer Erskine, and revised and completed by Gabriel Wilson, whose "vast compass of reading with his great collection of books," rendered him peculiarly qualified for the task. They are a master-piece of their kind, discussing the points at issue, with singular clearness and precision. They were given in to the Commission in March 1722, but instead of being read or discussed, were handed to the Committee for Purity of Doctrine, and with their remarks laid upon the table of the next Commission. The Assembly met soon after, and the conclusion of the whole matter was, that an Act was passed, explaining and confirming the former, and refusing to repeal it. This Act of 1722 was in some

\* Paper given in to the Commission at their receiving the twelve Queries.

respects less offensive than that of 1720 ; at the same time, it professed to be confirmatory of it, and set forth the following objectionable tenets :—1. That in the gospel, properly so called, there are new precepts, as particularly faith and repentance that were never commanded nor required in the moral law, either directly or by necessary consequence. 2. That the law believers are under requires good works, as a federal or conditional mean of, and as having a causality in order to the obtaining of glory, and yet gives no federal right to it. 3. That the law as to the believer, is really neither divested of its promise of life, nor threatening of death. 4. That the believer ought to be moved to obedience by the hopes of enjoying heaven, or any good temporal or eternal, by his obedience as a federal, conditional mean or cause thereof. The Assembly, moreover, in this Act, “strictly prohibit and discharge all the ministers of this Church, to use by writing, printing, preaching, catechising, or otherwise teaching, either publicly or privately, the positions condemned, or what may be equivalent to them, or of like tendency under pain of the censures of the Church, conformed to the merit of their offence ; and do ordain the several Presbyteries, Synods, and Commissions of the General Assemblies of this Church, to take particular care that the premises be punctually observed by all ministers and members of this Church ; and more especially, the Presbyteries and Synods within whose bounds any of the brethren reside who signed the Representation : And because of the injurious reflections contained in their Representation, the Assembly do appoint their Moderator in their name,

to rebuke and admonish them; and though their offence deserves a much higher censure, yet the Assembly forbears it, in hopes that the great lenity used towards them shall engage them to a more dutiful behaviour in time coming."

The rebuke was administered, but, at the same time, a protest, signed by the whole of the Representatives, was given in by Mr Kid, which, after narrating the steps taken in the matter, concluded thus:—"We do protest that we look upon the said fifth Act of Assembly 1720, as contrary to the Word of God, and to the foresaid Standards of doctrine and covenants, and of what we have complained in the foresaid eighth Act as of dangerous consequence thereto; and that therefore we dare not in any manner of way, no not by silence, consent unto, or approve of them, nor the acts of Assembly relative thereunto; and that it shall be lawful to us, agreeable to the Word of God, and the Standards of doctrine aforesaid in this Church, to profess, preach, and still bear testimony unto the truths condemned, or otherwise injured by the said acts of Assembly, notwithstanding of the said acts, or whatsoever shall follow thereupon; upon all which we take instruments and crave extracts."

This was a bold step, and yet the Assembly found it expedient to take no notice of it whatever. The reason of this, was not merely, that flagrant reports of Professor Simson's heresies were abroad, but chiefly, that the country at this period was threatened with invasion, and the Government were extremely anxious, that no measures should be taken tending to create division among the subjects of the



realm. The king's letter to the General Assembly of 1721 was significant enough :—" We hope you will apply yourselves with concord and unanimity to dispatch the affairs proper and necessary to be considered in this Assembly, and guard against all matter of contention, since you cannot but foresee the many unhappy consequences with which divisions among you may be attended." A similar hint was given to the Assembly of 1722 ; and from a communication of Mr Wodrow, it appears, that the Assembly which should have met at three o'clock to discuss the cause of the Representers, did not meet till five, " out of tenderness to the Representers, and from the fear of a breach which the Commissioner, the Earl of London, insisted upon, that it might by all means be prevented, as unfit for our present feared confusions."

Thus worldly policy was brought to bear upon the ecclesiastical proceedings of that day, and " had not this influence been exerted (remarks the late Dr M'Crie in an article in the Christian Instructor, to which we are indebted for several of the particulars we have mentioned) there is reason to think that the sentence would have been more severe : and in that case the Secession would have taken place ten years earlier than it actually happened."

Notwithstanding this worldly policy, however, the Marrow-men were exposed to grievous persecution. One of the queries (says Ebenezer Erskine) at our privy censures in Synod and Presbytery is,—whether we obey that Act which condemns the Marrow ?" and Mr Erskine, in common with others, was greatly annoyed, by being brought before his ecclesiastical

superiors for alleged departures from the Standards. Such indeed was the state of matters that cases of license, ordination, and translation were decided according to the sentiments the candidates were understood to hold respecting the Marrow. To use the words of Ralph Erskine, "The disposition of the judicatories too evidently appeared, whenever any student or candidate was supposed to be tinctured with the Marrow, that is, a gospel spirit. There was no quarter for such : queries upon queries were formed to discourage them, and stop their way, either of being entered upon trials, or ordained unto churches ; whilst those that were of the most loose and corrupt principles were most favoured by them. These things are too notour to be denied, and these were some of the sad and lasting effects of Acts of Assembly, and the sad occasion of the planting many churches with men that were little acquainted with the gospel, yea, enemies to the doctrines of grace."\*

Such being the deplorable state of things in the Church of Scotland, it is not surprising, that the pious portion of the people should have made vigorous efforts to support the friends of evangelical truth, and that among other things, they should have at length petitioned the General Assembly to rescind the Act of 1720. This they did in 1732, just the year before the Secession took place. The petition had nearly two thousand signatures attached to it, and was, on many accounts, entitled to consideration. It was, however, dismissed without a hearing, so odious to

\* Appendix to Faith no Fancy.

the supreme party in the Church of Scotland was everything in favour of the Marrow.

It was therefore, as may be inferred from the whole course of our narrative, to an extremely prejudiced audience, that Ebenezer Erskine spoke, when, as Moderator, he opened the Synod of Perth and Stirling, October 10th, 1732. His text was Psalm cxviii. ver. 22, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner." The sermon gave great offence, and originated a series of proceedings that eventually drove him out of the Establishment. Still it is abundantly evident from the contents of the sermon itself, that its remarks upon the manner in which the rights of the christian people were invaded by Patronage, would not have excited so great a turmoil, but for its highly evangelical tone, and the part its author had taken in the Marrow Controversy. Mr Ferrier, in his Memoirs of the Rev. William Wilson, states in regard to it, "that the parts alleged to be exceptionable, seem to come in naturally and without the smallest effort, and are so faithful a preaching of Christ, that had his accusers, who so vehemently objected to them, been humble zealous ministers, and not, as they seem to have been, actuated by pride and opposition to evangelical truth and order, they could never have thought of resting any accusation on grounds so untenable." The Marrow Controversy then must be ranked as one of the proximate causes of the Secession, but, as will be seen from our next chapter, the Secession became more identified with this controversy by the appearance of the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace, one of the ablest documents

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emitted by the Fathers of the Secession, and to which the controversy gave rise.\*

\* In justice to some who sided with the Anti-Marrow-men, we give a place to the following remarks in their favour:—“Scriptural purity of doctrine (says Mr Brown in his ‘Gospel Truth,’ &c.) must always be maintained, whoever should deviate from it: but we with pleasure do justice to the characters of several violent Anti-Marrow-men. Mr M'Laren's ministry at Kippen, Carstairs, and Edinburgh, met with much acceptance among judicious Christians, and he was eminently holy in his practice. Mr Flint was a good and learned man; he and Mr M'Laren, both in judicatories, and from the press, ably and zealously maintained the truth against Simson's errors. Professor Hamilton was an able divine; to use Mr Boston's words—‘He several years after the controversy ingenuously declared to me his satisfaction with what we called the Deed of Gift, and his conviction that the gospel could not be preached without it; and that of his own accord.’ Of another of these ministers he says, ‘I had a particular regard for Mr John Goldie, a grave and learned man, upon the account of his candour and ingenuity, though joined with principles very contrary to mine.’ Professor Dunlop is known for his able defence of Confessions of Faith. Mr Craig's good sense and piety are apparent in his sermons and poems on the spiritual life. Mr Colden (the friend of Boston's youth) was a holy and useful minister; and Principal Hadow left in his closet, papers discovering the exercise of a truly pious mind, among others, a solemn personal covenant.”

## CHAPTER II.

Act of the Associate Presbytery in 1742, concerning the Doctrine of Grace. Its exhibition of the Marrow Doctrine of the Atonement. Rapid spread of the Secession under its Marrow leaders.

THE Secession took place in 1733. On the 5th December of that year, Messrs Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, Alexander Moncrieff, and James Fisher, commonly called the four brethren, met at Gairney Bridge, in the neighbourhood of Kinross, and after continuing in prayer and deliberation for two days, formed themselves into "The Associate Presbytery." Nine years after, they issued their Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace. The reason of this delay, as given by themselves, was that they could not, at an earlier period, do justice to the subject, "by reason of the great variety of other matters" that required to be placed immediately before the public; but no sooner was the pressure of their first difficulties removed, than they addressed themselves to the task of "asserting the truth from the Holy Scriptures, and our Standards of doctrine concerning the free grace of God, in the salvation of

mankind lost, in opposition to the corrupt doctrine vented in some Acts of Assemblies, darkening and enervating the same; and to this they reckoned themselves the more warranted and obliged, in regard that the salvation of sinners was manifestly endangered by errors and mistakes anent the nature of faith, and God's gift of eternal life unto us, the complete satisfaction of the glorious surety, the absolute freedom of the Covenant of Grace, and other important doctrines opposed and subverted by the Acts of Assembly."\*

From the topics adverted to in the above extract, it will be seen that the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace embraces a wide field of theology, to enter on which would be foreign to the design of the present history. We shall, therefore, confine our attention to those portions of the Act which relate to the Atonement, and the Marrow doctrine on the subject.

This Act is entitled "Act of the Associate Presbytery concerning the Doctrine of Grace, wherein the said doctrine, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and agreeably thereto, set forth in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, is asserted and vindicated from the errors vented and published in some Acts of the Assemblies of this Church, passed in prejudice of the same;" and in referring to the Assembly's Deed of 1720, it takes notice, in the first place, of the injury done to truth, under the head of "Universal Atonement and Pardon."

"Under this head," (says the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace) "the following passages are

\* Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace.

quoted by the Assembly. Marrow, &c. p. 108, 'Christ hath taken upon him the sins of all men.' The author's words are Christ as man's surety,—according to that eternal and mutual agreement that was betwixt God the Father and him—put himself in the room and place of all the *faithful*, Isa. liii. 6, *and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Then came the law, as it is the covenant of works, and said" (here the author cites Luther's words) "I find him a sinner, yea, such an one as has taken upon him the sins of all men, therefore let him die—and so the law—set upon him, and killed him, and by this means was the justice of God fully satisfied, his wrath appeased, and all true believers acquitted from all their sins," &c.

"The next passage quoted by the Assembly is, p. 119, 'The Father hath made a Deed of Gift and Grant unto all mankind, that whosoever of them all shall believe in his Son shall not perish, &c., (that is, whosoever believes, or is persuaded, that Christ is his, for this must be the sense according to the former passages.) Hence it was that Christ said to his disciples, *Go and preach the gospel to every creature under heaven*; that is, Go and tell every man without exception, that here is good news for him, *Christ is dead for him.*' The author adds, *and if he will take him and accept of his righteousness, he shall have him.* Here the author brings in the similitude of a good king causing a proclamation to be made through his whole kingdom, that all rebels and banished men shall safely return home, because, at the suit and desert of some dear friend of theirs, it hath pleased the king to pardon them. 'Certainly (says the author) none of these rebels ought to doubt but he

shall obtain true pardon for this rebellion, and so return home, and live under the shadow of that gracious king.' Then follows the quotation of the Assembly:—'Even so our good King, the Lord of heaven and earth, hath, for the obedience and desert of our good brother, Jesus Christ, pardoned all our sins.' It is added by the author, 'And made a proclamation throughout the whole world, that every one of us may safely return to God in Jesus Christ. Wherefore (says he) I beseech you make no doubt of it, *but draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*, Heb. x. 22.' The Assembly likewise quote pp. 127, 128, where the author is exhorting and encouraging sinners to come to Christ or believe in him, notwithstanding of their sins, and the aggravations of them, from these Scriptures,—*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* The Assembly's judgment upon the above passages is as follows:—'Here is asserted an universal redemption as to purchase, contrary to John x. 10, 15, 27, 28, 29, and xv. 13, and xvii.; Titus ii. 14; Conf. chap. iii. sec. 6, chap. viii. sec. 8; Larger Cat., Q. 59.

"There is nothing in the above passages (continues the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace) that in the least countenances universal redemption as to purchase, a doctrine which the Presbytery rejects and condemns as contrary to the Scriptures, and places of our Confession and Catechisms quoted by the Assembly. Nor can the author of the Marrow be justly censured for venting any such error; for



he plainly teacheth through the whole of his book, that Christ represented and suffered for none but the elect; as, p. 108, 'Christ put himself in the room and place of all the faithful;' by which he understands the elect, as he expressly declares in the first sentence of his preface, 'Jesus Christ, the second Adam, did, as a common person, enter into covenant with God his Father, for all the elect; that is to say (says he), all those that have or shall believe on his name.' Whereas the Universalists contend that God, in sending of Christ, had no respect to *some* more than to *others*, but destined Christ for a Saviour to *all* men *alike*.

"As the author has expressly declared himself for a particular redemption and representation, so neither will the above passages, quoted by the Assembly, bear the charge of an universal redemption as to purchase. The first passage from the Marrow, p. 108, 'Christ hath taken upon him the sins of all men,' is part of a sentence quoted from Luther on the Galatians, and is sufficiently guarded against the charge of universal redemption as to purchase, by what the author says immediately before and after the said passage as above.

"As to the next condemned position, *God the Father hath made a Deed of Gift and Grant unto all mankind, that whosoever of them all shall believe in his Son shall not perish but have everlasting life*, will indeed bear a sufficiency of worth and merit in the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of all men, and the removal of all legal bars that stood in the sinner's way; and that Christ crucified is the ordinance of God for the salvation of mankind, in the use-making of which

only they can be saved; and consequently, a full warrant to gospel ministers to proclaim these glad tidings unto every man, and a warrant to all and every one to believe these glad tidings, with particular application to their own souls. But all this will not infer an universal atonement or redemption as to purchase. Neither will the following words infer any such charge,—‘Go and preach the gospel to every creature under heaven; that is, Go and tell every man without exception, that here is good news for him, Christ is dead for him; and if he will take him, and accept of his righteousness, he shall have him.’ It is manifest from the book itself, that the author’s design in quoting the above passage from Dr Preston’s Treatise on Faith, is not to determine concerning the extent of Christ’s death, but to discover the warrant that sinners have to believe in Christ, namely, the unlimited offer and free Gift of Christ to every man in the world, which necessarily supposes, that Christ crucified is the ordinance of God for salvation to mankind, as distinguished from fallen angels; and therefore, the obvious meaning of the expression must be, Tell every man that Christ is dead for him, that is, for him to come to, or believe on for salvation; even as it might be said to the manslayer of old, that the city of refuge was prepared and open for him to fly to that he might be safe. And this is what the author of the Marrow, according to Scripture, declares, that every man ought to be persuaded of, namely, that Christ is the ordinance and Gift of God for salvation to him in particular; which is quite contrary to the doctrine of the Arminians, who deny a particular persuasion

to be in faith, upon the free offer in the gospel as to the person's own salvation.

“ Since then it appears, from the sense and meaning of the author, that the above passages cannot be interpreted as favouring universal redemption as to purchase, there must be something else intended by the condemnatory sentence of the Assembly. And it will be obvious from the tenor and strain of the Assembly's Act, that under the misapplied title of universal redemption as to purchase, they condemn the universal and unlimited offer of Christ unto mankind-sinners, as such. For, although the Assembly of 1722 seems to own, that the revelation of the divine will in the Word affords a warrant to offer Christ unto all, and a warrant to all to receive him ; yet they can own that warrant only in a consistency with their notion of faith, that is, a warrant only for the elect, or those who are so-and-so qualified to receive Christ ; but they do not own that mankind-sinners, as such, however sinful and miserable, have any such warrant ; and consequently, the revelation of the divine will in the Word, making such a Gift of Christ to the world of mankind-sinners, as such, as affords a warrant to offer Christ unto all without exception, or to preach the Gospel to every creature, and a warrant to all to receive him ; and the Sovereign grace that has made this Grant, or Deed of Gift, not to devils, but to men : are encroached upon and injured by the Acts of both Assemblies, annis 1720 and 1722.”

“ The Scripture (continues the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace) expressly asserteth, John iii. 27, *A man can receive nothing except it be given him*

*from above*; and therefore the receiving of Christ necessarily presupposeth a giving of him. There may be indeed a giving of Christ where there is no receiving, as this is the great sin of the generality of the hearers of the gospel, who will not come unto him that they may have life; but in no case could there be a receiving of Christ for salvation, if there were not a giving of him before; or, which is the same thing, a revelation of him in the Word, affording a warrant for sinners, as such, to receive him. Now this Deed of Gift, or Grant, made to all mankind, in the Word, is the very foundation of our faith, and the ground and warrant of the ministerial offer, without which no minister could have authority to preach the gospel to every creature, or to make a full, free, and unhampered offer of Christ, his grace, righteousness, and salvation to all mankind, to whom they have access in providence."

"This Deed of Gift, or Grant, of Christ in the Word unto mankind-sinners, as such, is expressly set forth in several texts of Scripture—'Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.' 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' 'My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.' 'For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' 'This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' 'Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.' From which scriptures the following truths are evidently clear:—(1.) Although the purchase and application of redemption

be peculiar to the elect, yet the warrant to receive Christ is common to all, as they are sinful men and women of Adam's family. 'Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men!' (2.) The giving, mentioned in the above texts, is not to be understood of giving into possession, which is peculiar to them only who believe; but it is a giving by way of offer, whereupon one may take possession; or such a giving as warrants a man to believe, or receive the gift; and, therefore, must be anterior to actual believing, even as the manna behoved to be given, or rained down, before it could be tasted or fed upon. And thus 'God gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' From whence it follows, that Christ is the Saviour of the world, and his salvation a common salvation. So that mankind lost have a common interest in him, which fallen angels have not; it being lawful and warrantable for us, not for them, to take possession of Christ, and the whole of his salvation. (3.) The persons to whom this Grant and offer is made are not the elect only, but mankind considered as lost. For the Record of God being such a thing as warrants all to believe on the Son of God, as appears from the above scriptures, it is evident that it can be no such warrant to tell men that God hath given eternal life to the elect; as the offering of a gift to a certain select company can never be a warrant for all men to receive, or take possession of it. This will further appear if it be considered that the great sin of unbelief lies in not believing the Record, that God hath given us eternal life. Unbelief doth not

consist in a mere disbelieving of that proposition, that God hath given eternal life to the elect, for the most despairing unbeliever may be persuaded hereof, and their unbelief of it adds to their anguish and torment. But they do not set to their seal that God is true; on the contrary, they make God a liar in not believing the Record of God, even that he hath given unto them eternal life in his Son Jesus Christ; as hereby they deny the faithfulness of God in that Record, and his being, indeed in earnest, in that Grant and Gift of Christ made unto sinners, as such, in the gospel. They slight and despise the authority of a God of grace, commanding them to give this answer of a particular applying faith unto the offer of his grace in his Word, and his call to receive the same; and so, flying in the face of God's Record and testimony, they deservedly perish in unbelief, seeing the kingdom and Gift of God was brought *near* to them in the offer of the gospel, and they would not take it."

"The above doctrine concerning the Gift of Christ in the Word, unto mankind-sinners, is likewise from the Holy Scriptures, asserted in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, particularly Conf. chap. vii. sec. 3, 'He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved, and promising his Holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe,' where it is plain, that the offer of life and salvation, is unto mankind considered as sinners; and that, therefore, sinners as such have a warrant to believe, or receive the unspeakable Gift of God, according to the Scriptures quoted in the Confession,—*Go ye*

*unto all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. God so loved the world, &c.* And the same doctrine is also taught, Larger Cat., Quest. 63.

“Wherefore the Presbytery did, and hereby do, for the grounds and reasons above mentioned, acknowledge, declare, and assert, That God the Father, moved by nothing but his free love to mankind lost, hath made a Deed of Gift and Grant of his Son Jesus Christ, unto mankind in the Word, that whosoever of them all shall receive this Gift by a true and lively faith, shall not perish, but have everlasting life; or which is the same thing, that there is a revelation of the divine will in the Word, affording a warrant to offer Christ unto all mankind without exception, and a warrant to all freely to receive him, however great sinners they are, or have been; and that this Gift is made to mankind only, and not to fallen angels; according to the doctrine held forth from the Scriptures and our Confession above quoted.

“And the Presbytery hereby reject and condemn the following tenets and opinions, contained in, or couched under, the foresaid Acts of Assembly:—  
(1.) That the free, unlimited, and universal offer of Christ, in the gospel to sinners of mankind, as such, is inconsistent with particular redemption; or that God the Father his making a Deed of Gift unto all mankind, that whosoever of them all shall believe on his Son, shall not perish, but have everlasting life, infers an universal atonement, or redemption as to purchase. (2.) That this Grant or offer is made only to the elect, or to such who have previous qua-

fications commending them above others. Which doctrines are quite contrary to the passages of Scripture, and our Confession of Faith, above quoted."

Such is the amount of what is contained in this Act on the subject of the atonement,—an Act which "was unanimously approved of, enacted, and ordered to be published" by the Associate Presbytery in 1742,—the Presbytery consisting, at that period, of the Rev. Messrs Ebenezer Erskine, Stirling; Alexander Moncrieff, Abernethy; Ralph Erskine, Dunfermline; James Fisher, Glasgow; James Thomson, Burntisland; Thomas Nairn, Abbotshall; Thomas Mair, Orwell; Adam Gib, Edinburgh; James Mair, Linton; David Smyton, Kilmaurs; William Hutton, Stow; Andrew Clarkson, Craigmullen; John Cleland, Balfron; George Brown, Perth; William Campbell, Ceres; Thomas Ballantyne, Sanquhar; David Horn, Cambusnethan; Patrick Mathew, Midholm; James Scot, Gateshaw; and Andrew Arrot, Dunnichen.

In considering this Act one cannot fail to observe, how solicitous the Fathers of the Secession were to avoid everything approaching to Arminianism. Their object was to oppose those views of divine truth to which the Assembly had lent its sanction, and which appeared to them "effectually to shut that door of access unto the Lord Jesus which God has opened, by the grant that he has made of Christ in the gospel to sinners of mankind." This was their great object, but in insisting on the unlimited and unhampered offer of Christ and his salvation, to every creature under heaven, they, at the same time, carefully guarded against giving the slightest coun-



tenance to the proposition, to which they pointedly refer, "that God in sending of Christ had no respect to *some*, more than to *others*, but destined Christ for a Saviour to *all men alike*." According to the Arminians, Christ died for all, and for all alike, having obtained, as the fruit of his sufferings, that common or universal grace, by the use of which, in the exercise of free-will men are put in a condition to save themselves. In opposition to this theory, the founders of the Secession maintained the doctrines of special grace, and of effectual calling, in virtue of which, those given to Christ from eternity by the Father, are in due time brought into a saving union with Christ and his work. To those thus chosen from everlasting, heaven becomes by the death of Christ, a purchased inheritance, into the possession of which they will ultimately be brought. Holding such sentiments, the Fathers of the Secession were accustomed, along with other orthodox divines, to restrict the terms,—substitute,—representative,—and surety,—to Christ as undertaking for the elect; and hence, they scrupled not to affirm, that he represented and suffered for them only. But while thus refusing to admit, that Christ died for all, destined for all alike, they notwithstanding strenuously contended for the doctrine, that Christ "was dead for all," and dead for all alike,—that is, as they explained it, dead for all *to come to*, Christ with his grace and righteousness, and salvation being accessible to all, and not only so, but actually made over to the acceptance of all, by a Deed of Gift, which Deed of Gift afforded to all, a full, legal, and equal right to appropriate Christ and all his benefits.

To some it has appeared, as if there were here something like inconsistency or contradiction. Can it be an error, it may be asked, to affirm that Christ *died for all*, and yet no error to affirm that Christ *was dead for all*? Do not the two statements, although somewhat differently expressed, teach one and the same thing? Principal Hadow, who was not slow to seize upon any advantage that presented itself, assailed the Marrow-men here, with considerable vigour, asserting that it was in vain for them to contend, that their doctrine was in any respect opposed to the universal redemption of the Arminians. To judge aright in this matter, it is necessary to attend to the important distinctions which the Marrow-men were careful to make and to exhibit. The proposition,—Christ died for all,—implied, in their estimation, one of two things; either that Christ died for all, with the intention of obtaining for all the same ultimate blessings,—a doctrine which inferred universal salvation; or that he died for all, with the intention of obtaining for all the same common grace;—a doctrine which inferred that the whole of Christ's engagements with the Father, went no farther than to put men into a salvable state. To neither of these doctrines could they subscribe, and therefore they abstained from the employment of language which, in their estimation, involved them. But the proposition—Christ is dead for all—was not liable in their view of the matter, to the same objections. It did not involve the idea of special relationship and special purpose, necessarily securing salvation; but it brought out the grand gospel doctrine, that between no sinner

and Christ, and consequently, between no sinner and salvation, did there exist any barrier in the way, either of right to approach, or of warrant to appropriate. In support of this, which they conceived to be the sum and substance of the gospel message, they quoted in their answers to the queries proposed to them by the Commission, the following passage from Traill's *Stedfast Adherence*:—"You are to believe that there is no impediment or hinderance, neither on God's part, nor thine, to hinder thee from partaking of Christ if thou be willing; this is a part of that faith that answers the faithfulness of God in the promise of the gospel, and which a poor creature should believe firmly, that there is no impediment on God's part, nor on my part, to hinder my partaking of Christ, according to God's offer, if I accept of him; the impediment on our part is sin; the impediments on God's part are the law and justice; the Lord hath declared these shall not stand; the law and justice stand in no man's way to hinder him from partaking of Christ, if he will accept thereof; neither shall sin hinder him; for the offer is made to all men as sinners, whatsoever they have been, and whatsoever they are." Thus Christ and his salvation are accessible to all, and to all alike, there being no barriers in the way of any man's coming to Christ, or claiming salvation on the ground of Christ's finished work.

Now this Deed of Gift, on which the Fathers of the Secession delighted to expatiate, was in their estimation, no fiction, but an actual Deed, constituting as such the ground of the ministerial offer, and the foundation of the sinner's faith.

I. It is the ground of the ministerial offer.

"For my part, (says Mr Hog,) I should never have had the confidence once to open my lips for offering Christ, in the gospel, did I not believe so much of the sufficiency or extent of his death, call it what you will, (I contend with no man about words,) as shall afford me warrant to say to the wickedest of sinners, *If ye believe, ye shall be saved.* This, I am sure, is the language of our glorious Lord and Master, *Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth. Come now and let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, &c.* And as to that which Principal Hadow challengeth concerning an universal Deed of Gift, &c., no more can be deduced from what's quoted in the Marrow, out of Dr Preston, than so much as layeth a *ground-work* for these offers of Christ to the worst of sinners, yea, and unto all to whom the gospel is preached, and without which a gospel dispensation is impossible."\* "Without question, (says Boston, in his notes to the Marrow,) the publishing and proclaiming of heaven's Grant, unto any, by way of ministerial offer, *presupposeth* the Grant, in the first place, to be made to them." "Now this Deed of Gift, or Grant, (says the Associate Presbytery,) made to all mankind, in the Word, is the very foundation of our faith, and the *ground* and warrant of the ministerial offer, without which, no minister could have authority to preach the gospel to every creature, or to make a

\* Conference betwixt Epaphroditus and Epaphras, page 15.

full, free, and unhampered offer of Christ, his grace, righteousness, and salvation, to all mankind, to whom they have access in providence."

From these extracts, it appears, that the Marrow-men did not resolve the Deed of Gift into the simple offer of the gospel, but considered it rather as the ground upon which the offer is made, the latter presupposing the former.\* Hence the minister of the gospel is to offer salvation to all, not merely because he is commanded by God to do so, but because he can point to the Father's Deed of Gift, which constitutes the ground upon which the offer is based.

## II. It is the foundation of the sinner's faith.

Faith respects Christ as its object, but faith cannot rest on a presumption, it must have a solid foundation, and the foundation, according to the Marrow-men, is the Deed of Gift, or the revealed declaration of the Father's having actually made over a crucified Christ to the acceptance of every sinner.

"The gospel, (says Boston,) is the report of a crucified Christ made over to sinners, as the device of

\* "Receiving necessarily supposes a giving, and to take what is not given, is but theft, robbery, or vitious intromission; John vi. 32. Saith Christ there to a promiscuous multitude, the greatest part of whom were unbelievers, as is evident from the sequel of the chapter, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven; where 'tis plain, that giving and offering are much the same thing with this difference only, that the Gift, or Grant of Christ in the word to sinners, is the ground upon which the offer is made." Sermon, Luke ii. 18, by Ebenezer Erskine.

heaven for their salvation. It is proclaimed by the authority of heaven, that Christ has died, and by his death purchased life and salvation for lost children of Adam : and that they and every one of them may have free and full access to him. Faith, trusting this report as true and good, the soul concludes the Saviour is mine, and leans to him for all the purchase of his death, for life, and salvation to itself in particular.”\*

“Christ’s death, (says Ralph Erskine,) as designed in God’s purchase, is not the first object of any man’s faith ; nor his death as applied to believers in particular ; but his death, as declared in the Word, in its relation to sinners in general, is the gospel revelation, and the glad news that comes to the ears of sinners ; and this, joined with the particular command to every one to believe in this Jesus, as dead and crucified for him, to build his faith and salvation upon.”†

The scripture (says the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace) expressly asserteth, John iii. 27, *A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above :* and, therefore, the receiving of Christ necessarily presupposeth a giving of him. There may be indeed a giving of Christ where there is no receiving, as this is the great sin of the generality of the hearers of the gospel, who will not come unto him that they may have life. But in no case could there be a receiving of Christ for salvation, if there were not a giving of him before ; or, which is the same thing, a revelation of him in the Word, afford-

\* Sermons on Isaiah, liii. 1.

† Brown’s Gospel Truth, page 391.

ing a warrant for sinners, as such, to receive him. Now this Deed of Gift, or Grant, made to all mankind in the word, is *the very foundation of our faith.*"

Thus, the Deed of Gift, according to the Marrow-men, is not only the ground of the ministerial offer, but the foundation of the sinner's faith; and, considered in this latter aspect, it possesses the following scriptural recommendations :—

### I. It is real.

It is not a fiction, but a fact. Faith in it is not believing a lie, but receiving a fully accredited truth, it being really the case that Christ and his salvation have been gifted to men, or made over to the acceptance of sinners.

### II. It is universal.

To use the language of all the Marrow-men, it "is conceived in the amplest terms, without any restriction to any particular set of men; it goes wide as the world, the world of men, to exclude fallen angels, but none of the family of fallen Adam." Being thus universal, it forms a broad and solid foundation for the sinner's faith, for no one can be guilty of presumption in believing that to be true in relation to himself, which is true in relation to all. Faith is the duty of all, and must therefore respect, in the first instance, a testimony which is true of all, and true of all whether they exercise faith in it or not. In the Synod of Fife a discussion arose on the Marrow, and some of the members were denying this Deed of Gift to mankind-sinners without exception, upon which Ebenezer Erskine

said in his usual commanding manner, and with great effect—"Moderator, our Lord Jesus says of himself, 'My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.' This our Saviour uttered to a promiscuous multitude, and let me see the man who dare say He said wrong."

III. It is a manifestation of divine love to all whom it concerns.

The love implied in it is called by the Marrow-men, God's "giving love;" and in illustration of it, they freely quoted such passages as these—"God so loved the world, that he gave," &c.; "Christ loved me, and gave himself for me." They had no idea of keeping out of the gospel, the love of the gospel, or of calling upon men not to credit God's love to them, until they had first ascertained their love to him. They reversed the process, and implored men, by the love which God had displayed in the Gift of his Son, to throw down the weapons of their rebellion, and to love him in return.

"There was a man-love (says Boston) in God, a love to the kind—mankind. 1. In securing, by an irreversible decree, the salvation of some of them. 2. In providing a Saviour for the whole of the kind. \* \* \* Believe it with application to yourselves. If upon this a secret murmur begins to go through your heart, 'But it was not for me,' crush it in the bud, for it is a bud of hell. If you are not one of the devil-kind, but of sinful mankind, it was for you. The Father gave Christ a Saviour for you, that if ye should believe in him you should not perish; he sent his Son from heaven with full instructions and



ample powers to save you, if you believe. And is not this love?" \*

" When we speak of the death of Christ (says Ebenezer Erskine) as a ground of faith, we abstract entirely from the ordinate sufficiency for the elect ; for that being among the secret things that belong unto the Lord, it can never be a ground of faith in Christ unto any man,—no, not unto the elect themselves, that Christ died for the elect, otherwise a man behoved to know his election before he adventured to believe, which is a thing absolutely impossible ; in regard our election of God is a thing that can only be known by our obeying the call of the gospel ; hence we are commanded to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. And, therefore, seeing it is not the ordinate sufficiency of the death of Christ that we are commanded to preach, which would lead us among the secret decrees of God, which don't belong unto us, it must needs be the intrinsic and legal sufficiency of the death of Christ that is to be held forth as the ground and foundation of faith to sinners of mankind. Hence are these universal expressions in scripture—' Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world ;' ' He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world ;' ' Who gave himself a ransom for all.' All mankind have such an interest in the death and satisfaction of Christ, as the devils have not. Yea, considering that it was the human nature that was the sacrifice,

\* Sermon, John iv. 14.

and that all mankind are related to him as taking hold of the human nature (as was said), it is impossible to conceive how all mankind, especially gospel hearers, should not have an interest in his death—I mean such as warrants them to say in faith—‘He loved me, and gave himself for me.’”\*

The above is from Ebenezer Erskine. His brother Ralph expresses himself in a similar manner. “There is (says he) a twofold love of God in Christ, that cannot be the ground of faith’s applying it to itself—viz. his love of destination and his love of approbation; his love of destination and purpose, whereby he is said to have chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, having predestinated us to the adoption of children. Again, his love of approbation and friendship, or complacency, such as that spoken of by John,—‘If any love me, and keep my words, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.’ Now, the object of the former love, viz. that of destination, is that of every elect soul, and that from all eternity, as well as in time, even before their conversion and union to Christ; the object of the latter, viz. the love of approbation, is every believer united to Christ, every saint. Now, these are precious doctrines of the gospel, and the sweetness of this divine love, both of destination from eternity before faith—and of approbation in time, after faith—may come to be felt in due time, when the soul, after believing, is filled with the Holy Spirit

\* Sermon, Heb. xi. 7.

of promise ; but yet none of these, I say, are the first ground upon which any sinner can build this particular application of Christ's giving love, saying, ' He loved me, and gave himself for me.' That love whereof the elect are the objects, who can apply till they know they are elected ? and that love whereof believers and saints are the objects, who can apply, that know themselves to be as yet neither believers nor saints ? And therefore, the love of God in the gospel, that is the first ground of faith and particular application, must be a love manifested to sinners as such, and consequently such a love as sinners, under the notion of sinners, may rely upon as exhibited in the gospel. Therefore I observe, the doctrine of the love and grace of God in the gospel, that lays a foundation for the particular faith I speak of, is the doctrine of his love of benevolence and good will in Christ Jesus, manifested to sinners of mankind, accompanied with a particular call to every one to believe this love."\*

The Rev. Alexander Moncrieff, who was employed, along with Ebenezer Erskine, in drawing out the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace, speaks to the same effect. " God as he is in Christ is a reconciled God ; yea, he is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself ; willing, on Christ's account, to be reconciled to any man of the world whatsoever who hears this gospel, and beseeching sinners to be reconciled to him through Christ : 2 Cor. v. 19-20. God is so well pleased with the satisfaction of Christ, that he doth entreat and obtest sinners to believe his love

\* Vol. vii. p. 140.

and good will to them, to stand no more at a distance from him, but to take the benefit of peace, of pardon, of grace and glory, for Christ's sake, and upon account of what he hath done." \*

And says the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace—

"The above doctrine concerning the Gift of Christ in the Word unto mankind-sinners, is likewise, from the Holy Scriptures, asserted in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, particularly Conf. chap. vii. sec. 3: 'He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him that they may be saved, and promising his Holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe.' Where it is plain, that the offer of life and salvation is unto mankind, considered as sinners; and that, therefore, sinners as such, have a warrant to believe, or receive the unspeakable Gift of God, according to the Scriptures quoted in the Confession,—'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. God so loved the world,' &c.; and the same doctrine is also taught, Larger Catechism, Question 63.

"Wherefore the Presbytery did, and hereby do, for the grounds and reasons above-mentioned, acknowledge, declare, and assert, that God the Father, moved by nothing but his *love* to mankind lost, hath made a Deed of Gift and Grant of his Son Jesus Christ unto mankind in the Word, that whosoever of them all shall receive this Gift by a true and lively faith 'shall not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

\* Sermons on Christ's call to the rising generation.

Having presented the leading features of the doctrine of the Marrow-men on the atonement, as involved in the Deed of Gift, it is necessary, to a complete view of the subject, to advert to their doctrine of assurance.

Faith, according to them, is the believing of a divine testimony, plain in its terms, and precious in its import. This testimony is the Record which God hath given concerning his Son. Besides exhibiting Christ's person as divine, and his death as a sacrifice for sin, this Record presents Christ and his salvation as God's free Gift to mankind-sinners, without exception, to be enjoyed by them without money and without price. Faith believes all this—that is, it credits the divine testimony as true, and the sinner so believing it, feels and acts accordingly—he rejoices in the gracious declarations of the gospel, takes Christ for his Saviour, in virtue of God's Gift of him in his Word, and rests his hopes upon his all-sufficient work. Faith, therefore, being the sincere and appropriating belief of a revealed testimony concerning the Saviour, cannot exist where there is no assurance of the truth of the testimony itself, for in so far as there is no assurance of the truth of the testimony, it is unbelief. Hence the Marrow-men conceived, that wherever there was faith in God's testimony, there was an assurance of Christ and his salvation being ours, that is, ours by Deed of Gift, or ours in right to take them, in virtue of God's Grant.

They carefully distinguished, however, between the assurance of faith, as to Christ being ours in the Gift, and the assurance of sense, as to Christ being ours in possession. This latter kind of assurance,

they regarded as desirable and attainable, but by no means so belonging to the essence of justifying faith, as that there could be no justifying or saving faith without it. They were not backward to confess, that assurance of being in a state of grace, or assurance of ultimate salvation, was what they themselves did not possess, at all times, or to such a degree, as to dispel the misgivings to which, being men of like passions with others, they were subject. Hence the "doubtful faith," which they repudiated, was not the faith that might be accompanied with doubts as to our final salvation or as to our being presently in a gracious state; but it was the faith which was accompanied with doubts as to the truth of God's Record, or, in other words, our right and warrant to appropriate Christ and his salvation as our own, in virtue of God's declared Grant of them to us in His Word. The cherishing of such doubts, they considered to be the denying the truth of the Divine Testimony, the Testimony of Him who cannot lie. "God," says Boston, "set the sun in the heavens to be a light to the world; and do not you, therefore, judge that you have a right unto the light of that sun as well as the rest of mankind, and accordingly use it freely to work or read by it, as your own, by God's free gift? Jesus Christ also is the light of the world (John viii. 12); given for a light to the Gentiles (Isaiah xlix. 6); and faith appropriates him, saying, the Lord is my light and my salvation (Psalm xxvii. 1.) Now you are a member of these societies, to wit, the world, and the Gentiles; therefore he is your light, that is, given for a light to you. Will you take Christ's own word upon it? You

have it (John vi. 32)—‘ My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.’ If your neighbour give you bread, you will reckon his gift thereof sufficient to make it yours. If your prince shall give you a house or land which he hath an unquestionable right to dispose of, you would reckon them truly yours by his gift, and would freely go and dwell in that house, and possess that land as your own. How is it, then, that when the Father gives you his Christ, yet you will not take—believe that he is yours—nor take possession of him as your own? Why, the truth of the matter lies here. You believe your neighbour, you believe your prince, but you believe not your God in his holy gospel, but make him a liar, not believing the Record that God gave of his Son (1 John v. 10.) But, whether you’ll believe or not, ’tis a truth, that Christ is your Saviour; and if you will not believe it now to your salvation, you will undoubtedly see your mistake hereafter. When perishing you will be convinced that you perish, not because you had not a Saviour, but because you neglected to make use of him.”\*

And says the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace, “ But the question is concerning the nature of that faith, which all the hearers of the gospel are called unto, and which the Scripture plainly describes to be a believing in God, and a trusting in his salvation, a receiving of Christ, a believing the Record, that God has given unto us eternal life, that he will be our God, and that we shall be his people; and so a calling him our Father, our Husband, our God,

\* View of the Covenant of Grace, p. 290.

upon the warrant of his own word of grace. Believers, indeed, may be frequently in the dark as to the reality of their faith, and their present saving possession of eternal life; and there is nothing in the Marrow denying or opposing this, yea, on the contrary, it is plainly asserted. But there is a great difference between the *assurance of our state of grace*, which respects the state we are in already, and the *assurance of the promise* of salvation, or an assured faith of righteousness and salvation in Christ Jesus, as held forth to every sinner of Adam's race, to whom the gospel comes to be received and applied by them, for their own benefit, according to that awful caution (Heb. iv. 1)—*Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it: viz. by unbelief*, as is clear from the context. For by this assurance, or persuasion of faith, and confidence in a promising God in Christ, we take possession of salvation, as presented to us in the promise, and thus we enter into rest (Heb. iv. 11.) But that assurance spoken of in the Articles of our Confession of Faith, and Catechism, cited by the Assembly, is an assurance, that the faith which we have is indeed the faith of God's elect; or that we are in a gracious *state*, the issue whereof shall be in full and complete salvation, which assurance is founded upon the evidence of the *reality* of our faith, by comparing it with the marks thereof in Scripture, the connexion stated in Scripture between these evidences and salvation, and the testimony of the Spirit, shining on his own work in the soul, and witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God. From all which it follows, that the passages of Scrip-



ture and of our Standards, quoted by the Assembly, do by no means condemn the assurance which is in the direct act of faith, or the appropriating persuasion of faith, corresponding to the Gift of Christ in the gospel to every sinner in particular." . . . "For the first thing to be believed, or to be persuaded of, upon the revelation of the Grant that God has made of Christ unto mankind-sinners in the Word, is, that Christ is ours; upon which there will follow, according to the measure of faith, a persuasion, that *we shall have life and salvation by him*, and that, *whatsoever he did, for the redemption of mankind, he did it for us.*"

From these extracts it will be seen, that as the Marrow divines held the Deed of Gift to be the foundation of our faith, or that, in virtue of which we are entitled to appropriate Christ and his benefits, so it was of the nature of this faith to be assured of the truth of the grounds on which it rested. According to the Anti-Marrow-men, there was no universal Deed of Gift, and no promises and offers of salvation to sinners as such, without exception, the promises and offers of salvation being confined to the elect, or to believers; or if these assumed a more extended aspect, and really looked as if actually addressed to mankind at large, yet they were so clogged with conditions, and so qualified and guarded, that they stripped the gospel of its majesty and its grace. Their system was a compound of Legalism and Evangelism, leading the sinner to look to Christ, and yet forbidding him to lean with certainty upon anything revealed in the gospel, with respect to Christ and his salvation, until looking inwardly on

himself, he saw there, in his begun faith, or repentance, or good works, some ground of comfort, confidence, and hope. But the Fathers of the Secession had "not so learned Christ." Rejecting this mixture of Legalism and Evangelism, they preached the gospel of the grace of God,—that gospel which opens up to the sinner all its rich and varied treasures, and placing them before him as heaven's choicest gifts, invites him to take them freely and at once.

The Fathers of the Secession soon gathered around them the best portion of the people of Scotland, those who valued the broad unfettered gospel of the Scriptures. It is impossible to peruse their sermons without feeling that they were the servants of the Most High God, raised up in a degenerate age, to show unto men the way of salvation. They were more than a match for their opponents, both in the pulpit and from the press, and failed not to expose and reprobate the doctrine that was taught by them. "See (says Ralph Erskine in his sermon on 'The word of salvation sent to sinners')—see how culpable they are who straiten the door and hamper the call of the gospel, saying in effect—If you have not such and such qualifications, this word of salvation is not to you: it is only upon such and such terms that it is to you. This is to make the gospel no gospel; it is as if Christ came to save saints, but not to save sinners. They contradict the very design of the gospel, which is a word of salvation to sinners of all sorts and sizes. To you is the word of this salvation sent—to you, oh sinner! is the door of salvation opened. Whatever straitens this door, whatever

doctrines you hear that hamper or limit the gospel offer, and tend to make you suppose there is no room for you, no access for you, you may suspect that to be either no gospel doctrine, or that has such a legal mixture accompanying it as you ought to shun like the devil, because it would keep you at a distance from Christ and salvation.

“The gospel strain brings the word of salvation freely to every sinner’s door, and supposes him to be destitute of all good qualities whatsoever, and leaves no room to any sinner to say, I am not allowed to come in.

“Consider the good warrant you have to intermeddle with this word of salvation. It is sent to you on purpose, that you may believe it with application to yourself, and that every one of you, thou man, thou woman, may take it home to thy own heart—for to thee is the word of salvation sent—to thee is this love-letter sent from heaven. Read the indorsement, and see if it be not to thee: it is backed to thee, oh guilty sinner! saying, Christ came to save sinners. It is backed to thee, oh inhabitant of the earth! that art not yet in hell. Look to me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth.”

The founders of the Secession were ably supported. Principal Robertson, the leader of the Moderate party during the days of their supremacy, will not be thought to have had any prejudice in behalf of the Secession, and yet, although but a boy when he heard Mr Hunter, the first licentiate of the Secession, he never could forget the earnestness of the preacher, nor the solemn and impressive manner in which this

young, but truly eloquent divine, presented to his audience the offers of the gospel. "Even yet (said the Principal, in a conversation which he had long after with a minister of the Secession), even yet, when I retire to my studies, the recollection of what I then heard thrills through my mind." It is not surprising the Secession spread and flourished with such men at its head; and even that overtures, on the part of the Church of Scotland, were made, inviting their return. But they were not to be seduced from the course on which they had entered, and refused all solicitations to accede or to submit to the judicatories they had left, having, in the character of the Associate Presbytery, deliberately declined to acknowledge their authority.

An event, however, occurred to mar the progress of the Secession. The Associate Presbytery having formed itself in 1744 into the Associate Synod, had under its inspection at this period about thirty settled congregations and sixteen vacancies in Scotland, besides several congregations in Ireland. But at the first meeting of this Synod, which was held at Stirling in 1745, a certain religious clause contained in an oath exacted from burgesses in several of the towns of Scotland became the subject of dispute, and so violent were the contentions engendered by this matter, that an open rupture took place in 1747, the effect of which upon the Secession could not have been otherwise than injurious in the extreme—turning the weapons of brethren against each other, and weakening that position of strength and influence to which the Secession had so justly and so rapidly attained. This unhappy disruption, however, was

in some respects overruled for good, while the division itself was ultimately healed in 1820, when the two great branches of the Secession, augmented in numbers, formed themselves into the United Secession Church. But these things will be taken notice of in the proper place. In the meantime, our attention must be turned to the discussions connected with the atonement, which were carried on in one of the sections of the Secession not long after this separation took place.

## CHAPTER III.

The Associate Presbytery formed into the Associate Synod—  
 Unhappy Division of the Synod in 1747—Introduction into  
 one Section of it, in 1754, of the Act against Arminian Errors  
 —The Rev. Thomas Mair's Objections to certain portions of  
 this Act, relating to the Atonement—Full Account of the  
 Proceedings in this Matter, terminating in Mr Mair's De-  
 position.

THE clause in the Burgess Oath, which occasioned the disruption to which we have referred, ran in the following terms:—"Here I protest before God and your Lordships, that I profess and allow with my heart the true religion presently professed within this realm, and authorised by the laws thereof: I shall abide thereat, and defend the same to my life's end, renouncing the Roman religion, called Papistry." The question in this case was, what is the meaning of the *true religion presently professed within this realm*? Does the oath imply an assent to the true religion as presently professed, and thus infer an approbation of those defections and corruptions in the Church of Scotland, against which the Secession is a practical protest? or, does the oath infer nothing more than an acknowledgment of the Protestant Presbyterian religion, as defined in the Standards and established by law—as being the religion to which the swearer

adheres in opposition to Popery? Different opinions were entertained on this question; some having no objections to the taking of the oath, or to the making it a matter of forbearance; while others would not submit to this. The result was, the Associate Synod, formed in 1744, was split in 1747 into two sections commonly designated Burgher and Anti-Burgher. Into the latter of the two was introduced, in 1754, the Act against Arminian Errors, to which we now direct our attention.

About the period of which we write, a certain Treatise on Justifying Faith attracted considerable attention. The author was Mr James Fraser, a gentleman of good extraction, and who possessed the estate of Brae in the north of Scotland. He became a Presbyterian minister during the reign of Charles the Second, and was settled at Culross in Clackmannanshire. His lot was cast in perilous times. He was shut up in Blackness Castle, and in the Bass for two years, and died at last at Edinburgh in 1698, "full (as he himself expressed it) of the consolations of Christ." His Treatise, which was not published during his lifetime, consists of two parts,—the former of which appeared in 1722, during the Marrow controversy; while the latter did not issue from the press till 1749. This (the latter part) gave rise to much discussion in the Reformed Presbytery, in consequence of two of its ministers, Messrs Hall and Innes, having imbibed the doctrine contained in it. The disputes thus originated, split the Presbytery in 1752 into two parts of nearly equal numbers, two ministers and two elders having adopted the new scheme, as it was called; and two ministers and

three elders having opposed it. Mr Hall and his supporters, in order to explain the matter, published a pamphlet, or judicial deed, entitled, "The True State of the Difference," &c.

This publication, together with the discussions connected with it, alarmed some ministers of the Secession, who were afraid the new scheme, as it was termed, would find favour with their people, particularly as it was known that one of their own number, the Rev. Thomas Mair of Orwell was inclined to Mr Fraser's doctrine. Mr Mair, it would appear, when a boy, had been employed in transcribing the original manuscript, which had probably come into possession of his uncle, the Rev. George Mair of Culross, who had been, if not the colleague, the immediate successor of Mr Fraser. The above circumstances are alluded to by the Rev. Adam Gib in the second volume of his Display, and are mentioned by him to account for the Act of 1754, against Arminian Errors, in the introduction, formation, and defence of which he had the principal hand.

This Act originated in an overture from the Presbytery of Edinburgh, in the preamble of which it is represented as "a matter of public notoriety, that the Arminian scheme of Universal Atonement and Redemption as to purchase, has been lately revived and industriously promoted in somewhat of a new and more ensnaring form."\* Before, therefore, proceeding to the consideration of this Act, it may be proper to adduce one or two quotations from the Treatise which called it forth.

"I judge it unwarrantable (says Mr Fraser) what

\* Display, vol. ii. p. 187.



some great and godly divines affirm, that the only reason why any in the visible church are bound to believe, especially reprobates, is the will of God; and that this command or signified will of his good pleasure is the formal ground, and only warrant of faith; for though it be true that by the command of God, we are warranted and encouraged, yet is this command rational and founded on some other thing: 2 Cor. v. 21. There expressly ye see the ground upon which believing is founded; he requests them to be reconciled, and that must be by accepting of Christ by faith; 'doth the apostle give no other reason but because this is the will of God? No, but he founds it on this, 'he hath made him sin for us.' So 1 John v. 11, when John exhorts them he writes unto, to the duty of believing, he gives some gospel-declaration to bottom their faith upon; what is that? 'He hath given us eternal life in his Son.' So 1 Tim. i. 15, our acceptance of Christ is founded on this, Christ came to save sinners. Ye will say, by laying hold on Christ crucified he becomes yours; and ye have interest in his blood. *Ans.* My laying hold on a crucified Saviour doth not make him crucified for me; if therefore Christ died not for me, my laying hold of him cannot make me to have interest in his death, and consequently can never give me salvation through his blood; for faith doth not alter the object, it remaineth the same whether believed or not believed."

Again, says Mr Fraser, in speaking of the death of Christ being for all, "The universal strain of Scripture expresses frequently, clearly, and variously, that Christ died for all, and that without any seeming

contradiction from other Scriptures, Isa. liii. 6, 'The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' 2 Cor. v. 14, 'We thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all,' &c. Rom. v. 18, 'By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.' Heb. ii. 9, 10, 'That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.' 1 Tim. iv. 10, 'Who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.' 1 John ii. 2, 'And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' 2 Pet. ii. 1, 'Denying the Lord that bought them,' and many others; and the death of Christ is universally expressed almost wherever its object is mentioned. There are four considerations which make me build the more upon this. 1. That these expressions are made use of to express the objects of redemption, which are used, and by which we are made to believe the most universal truths; as, that every man is created of God, that all shall die, shall rise again, and the like: if therefore we believe these truths because indefinitely and universally expressed; why not, that Christ died for all and every one, which is as universally expressed? 2. These testimonies declaring and expressing the extent and universality of Christ's death, are not contradicted plainly by other Scriptures; for there is no Scripture which testifies that there are some which have no interest in his death, nor can the same be gathered by any necessary consequence from Scripture, for any thing I could ever perceive. \* \* 3. Consider the various manner of expressions by which the extent of Christ's death is holden out,

as it would seem of purpose to put the business beyond debate, and to elide whatever our imaginations and unbelief might say to the contrary: here are first as comprehensive universal expressions in the matter of redemption, as there are in the matter of sin, death, creation, and the resurrection; all are said to be redeemed, as all are said to die, to have sinned; it is expressed by the terms *world* and *whole world*. Again, lest ye should say that the *all* spoken of, is all sorts of men; not *each*, or every man of mankind; the Spirit of God meets with them in Heb. ii. 9, where it is said, 'Christ tasted death for every man.' And lest ye should still say, this every man, is every elect man, the world of the elect; the Lord, of purpose to obviate this cavil, expresses himself partatively and distinctly, and tells us that he is the Saviour of all, both elect and reprobate, especially the elect who believe: 1 Tim. iv. 10. And lest it should after all this be said, that this is a salvation of ordinary preserving Providence, as he is said to preserve man and beast, he tells us plainly that he is 'the propitiation not only for our sins,' who believe, 'but for the sins of the whole world.'"

This Treatise, the appearance of which gave rise to so much discussion in the Reformed Presbytery, ultimately led to the introduction of the Act against Arminian Errors, entitled, "Act of the Associate Synod at Edinburgh, April 18, 1754, containing an assertion of some gospel truths, in opposition to Arminian Errors, upon the head of Universal Redemption."

It consists of the following seven Articles:—

I. That in the Covenant of Grace, our Lord Jesus Christ became the federal Head, and Representative of those only among mankind-sinners, whom God hath out of his mere good pleasure from all eternity elected unto everlasting life; and for them only he was made an undertaking Surety: Isaiah liii. 10, 11; John x. 26; xvii. 9; Rom. v. 15-21; Eph. i. 4, 5, 11; Col. i. 18; Conf. chap. iii. 6, and chap. viii. 1, 5; Larg. Cat. Q. 30, 31; Short. Cat. Q. 20, 21.

II. That our Lord Jesus Christ hath redeemed none others by his death, but the elect only; because for them only he was made under the law, made sin, and made a curse; being substituted only in their law, room, and stead, and having only their iniquities laid upon him, or imputed unto him: so that he did bear only their sins; for them only he laid down his life, and was crucified; for their sins only he made satisfaction to divine justice; for them only he fulfilled all righteousness; in their stead only was his obedience and satisfaction accepted; and for them only he purchased redemption, with all other benefits of the Covenant of Grace.

III. That there is but one special redemption by the death of Christ for all the objects thereof; as he died in one and the same respect, for all those for whom he in any respect died; or he died out of the greatest special love for all in whose room he laid down his life; with an intention of having them all effectually redeemed and saved, unto the glory of free grace: Isaiah liii. 4, 5, 6, 8; John x. 15; xv. 13; xvii. 19; Rom. v. 8, 9; viii. 33, 34; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13; iv. 4, 5; 1 Thess. v. 9, 10; Tit. ii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19, 20; 1 John iv. 9, 10; Conf. iii. 6;

viii. 1-5; xi. 3, 4; Larg. Cat. 44, 57; Short. Cat. 21.

IV. That the intercession of Christ is infallibly of the same extent, in respect of its objects, with the atonement and satisfaction made in his death: so that he actually and effectually makes intercession for all those for whom he laid down his life, or for whom he hath purchased redemption, that it may be fully applied to them in due season: John xvii. 24; Rom. viii. 34; Heb. vii. 24, 25; ix. 12, 24; Conf. viii. 8; xvii. 2; Larg. Cat. 44; Short. Cat. 25.

V. That the death of Christ, as it is stated in the Covenant of Grace, hath a necessary, inseparable, certain, and infallible connexion with, and efficacy for the actual and complete salvation of all those for whom he died; so that redemption is certainly applied, and effectually communicated, to all those for whom Christ purchased the same; all in whose stead he died being in due season effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and glorified: Isaiah liii. 10, 11; John vi. 37, 39; Rom. iv. 25; viii. 30; 1 Cor. i. 30; Eph. i. 11, 14; Col. i. 21, 22; Tit. iii. 7; Heb. ix. 12, 15; x. 10, 14; Rev. i. 5, 6; Conf. iii. 6; viii. 1, 5, 8; x. 1; xi.; Larg. Cat. 57, 59; Short. Cat. 20, 29.

VI. That Christ and the benefits of his purchase cannot be divided; neither can these benefits be divided one from another; wherefore we are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, or of the benefits procured by his death, only through the effectual application thereof to us by his Holy Spirit, working faith in us: and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling. And, whoever,

do actively receive and enjoy any benefits of his purchase, as they do it only in the way of enjoying himself, so they will all be brought forward in due time, to the full enjoyment of himself, and all his benefits for ever. And whatever things are actively received or used any otherwise than by faith in a state of union with Christ, are not to be reckoned among the benefits purchased by his death : Job xxiv. 18 ; Psalm xxxvii. 16 ; Prov. iii. 33 ; viii. 19, 21, 35 ; John i. 12 ; Rom. viii. 17, 32 ; 1 Cor. i. 9 ; iii. 21, 22, 23 ; 2 Cor. i. 20 ; Eph. i. 13, 14 ; ii. 8 ; Tit. iii. 5, 6, 7 ; Conf. iii. 6 ; viii. 1, 5 ; Larg. Cat. 57, 58 ; Short. Cat. 29, 30.

VII. That whereas there is a general, free, and unlimited offer of Christ, and salvation through him, by the gospel, unto sinners of mankind as such, (upon the foundation of the intrinsic sufficiency of the death of Christ, his relation of a Kinsman-Redeemer to mankind-sinners as such, and the promise of eternal life through him to mankind-sinners as such in the gospel,\*) with an interposal of divine authority in the gospel call, immediately requiring all the hearers thereof to receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation, as he is freely offered to them in the gospel ; and whereas all the hearers of the gospel are thus privileged with an equal, full, and immediate warrant to make a particular application of Christ, with all his redemption and salva-

\* " What is contained in this parenthesis was got inserted by Mr Moncrieff, though others apprehended it to be anticipating of what more naturally follows." M.S. note by Adam Gib, subjoined to his copy of the Display, in possession of William Ellis, Esq., his son-in-law.

tion, severally unto themselves, by a true and lively faith ; so the gospel offer and call containing the warrant of faith cannot require or infer any universal atonement and redemption as to purchase, but are altogether consistent with and conformed unto the scripture doctrine of particular redemption, which is expressed in the six preceding articles :—Because our Lord Jesus Christ, in the glorious constitution of his person as God-man, Immanuel, God with us—doth stand in an equal or undistinguished relation of a Kinsman-Redeemer to mankind-sinners as such ; and because his mediatory offices in the true and glorious nature thereof do stand in an equal or undistinguished relation and suitableness to the case, and need of mankind-sinners as such ; and because the atonement and righteousness of Christ are in themselves of a justice-satisfying and law-magnifying nature : containing the utmost of what law and justice can require, for repairing the whole breach of the covenant of works, and fulfilling the same,—in order to the justification of mankind-sinners as such, who are warranted to betake themselves thereto by faith ; and because, in the case of a sinner's justification, law and justice have no respect to God's sovereign counsel about what persons belong to the election of grace, for whom only Christ was employed to make satisfaction and fulfil all righteousness, and for whom alone he intentionally did so ; or, which is materially the same thing, they have no respect to the particular objective destination or intention of Christ's satisfaction and righteousness in the transaction of the new covenant, as any way belonging to the pleadableness thereof at the bar of law and

justice; but they (*viz.* law and justice) have a respect only unto the justice-satisfying and law-magnifying nature of this atonement and righteousness; in behalf of every sinner who is found betaking himself thereunto by faith upon the divine warrant, as the same is "unto all and upon all them that believe," without any difference; and because, therefore, the formal ground and reason of faith doth nowise lie in any particular objective destination of Christ's satisfaction and righteousness, or in any particular objective intention wherewith he made and fulfilled the same; but it wholly lies in the glorious person and offices of Christ, with his satisfaction and righteousness, as freely and equally set forth by the gospel unto all the hearers thereof: with the Lord's gracious call and command for each of them to come over by faith unto this glorious foundation, and with absolute promises of justification and eternal life through Christ to mankind-sinners as such in the gospel, the possession of which blessings is to be certainly obtained in this way of believing: Psal. lxxxix. 19; Prov. viii. 4, 18, 19; Isaiah ix. 6; liii. 8; lv. 1, 4; Jer. xxiii. 6; Mat. i. 23; iii. 15; xi. 28; John i. 12; iii. 16; vi. 32, 37, 39, 40; Acts x. 43; xiii. 38, 39; Rom. iii. 22, 26; x. 4, 8, 9, 10; xvi. 26; Eph. i. 13; 1 Tim. ii. 5; 1 John iv. 8, 16; v. 11; Rev. xxii. 17; Conf. vii. 3; viii. 2, 4; xi. 1; xiv. 2; xxi. 5; Larg. Cat. 32, 63, 72, 194; Short. Cat. 31, 86.

Such are the seven articles of the Act against Arminian errors, which was passed in April 1754, but not without opposition, the Rev. Thomas Mair, who demurred to several of the articles when first brought before the Synod, having presented a paper



at the subsequent meeting in August, containing reasons of dissent. This dissent proceeded upon general grounds, complaining of the Act, on account of its being framed with a special eye to Mr Fraser's Treatise, without, however, condescending on any of its positions, a mode of procedure which Mr Mair regarded as objectionable ; the Treatise referred to being one with all the statements of which he could not coincide, but with the scope or substance of which he professed himself satisfied. The Synod refused to receive a dissent of this general nature, but left it open to him to take such farther steps in the matter as he might see fit. The result was a new paper of dissent, which we shall now lay before the reader. The document is long, but as the subject is interesting, and as the document presents Mr Mair's opinions in his own words, we shall quote it at length.

" Whereas (says he,) the very Reverend Synod have seen meet to lay aside a former paper, which I offered under the title of Reasons of Dissent, &c. on account of their not reckoning the said reasons to strike against anything directly contained in their late Act anent doctrine, or against any article or doctrine therein ; I shall not give the Reverend Synod any trouble now about what is contained in the said paper, further than to signify, that as what was there represented was, and still is, of weight with me ; so my great aversion from any difference with the very Reverend Synod in matters of doctrine, and my hopes of getting any appearance thereof removed, in the way of a deliberate consideration of the said reasons of dissent, (as they have a view to the Act, as standing in connexion with the preamble of the

overture of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, embodied in the Act,) was what then led me to an expressing of my mind in the manner there set forth. I shall only add, that I cannot but own myself still unsatisfied with the said preamble, and with its being emitted in the body of the Synod's Act, though without their formal approbation thereof; and that I apprehend its standing there, together with the manner in which the Synod deliver their mind in their introduction to the articles in the Act, seem still to speak forth a connexion between the articles in the Act, and the said preamble, which tends much to difficult me concerning the articles, as thus connected.

“ And now, when I enter on the consideration of the particular doctrines in the Act, in this manner; namely, of offering my reasons, or pointing to my difficulties, which stand in the way of my acquiescing therein as laid, as it fills me with heaviness to think of my being in this manner engaged with the very Reverend Synod, so it fills me with trembling at the thoughts of what may be the Lord's voice in the dispensation, and what may be the consequents of it; and at the thoughts of my own weakness for managing such work, and my great danger of turning aside either to right or left hand.

“ But as I conceive the matter to be of very great and high concern for the Lord's glory, the peace of the Church, and edification of souls, that any different views or expressions should take place, concerning the weighty and mysterious subject treated in the Synod's Act, which is now made a part of our standards; I desire with all humility to offer the

following things to the consideration of the very Reverend Synod, as, what continues to darken my mind with reference to the said Act, so far that I cannot have freedom hitherto, to fall in with it as a part of the confession of my faith.

“(1.) The first difficulty I take notice of, ariseth from what is contained complexly in the first five articles, where the declared design is to exclude all, and every kind of universal extent of the death of Christ, as to the objects thereof; and to deny that in any sense whatsoever, he died for all mankind; or that even all the hearers of the gospel have any interest whatsoever in his death, or claim thereto as for them.

“I heartily agree with, and desire through grace to live and die in, the faith of what is delivered in our excellent Standards upon this head, and particularly in the passages quoted by the Reverend Synod upon these articles; where, I think, it is evident that the compilers are all along treating of the great, the primary, direct, and special design and end of the death of Christ, with reference to men,—namely, the redemption of the elect, and of them only. But, as it appears to me that in these articles there is a going further than what is express or intended in our Standards, so I cannot see any real foundation in these Standards for such an absolute exclusion of all beside the elect, as is laid in the Act. Neither can I find any clearness to fall in with such an absolute exclusion of, and declared opposition unto, the common interest, that all men, and particularly all hearers of the gospel, have in the death of Christ, as in some sense for them. And

though it could not be clearly expressed, or a suitable term found, whereby this claim—that mankind-sinners as such, have to the death of Christ—should be denominated, yet I humbly conceive the truth thereof behoved to be maintained, in regard of the clear revelation thereof in the Scriptures, where we have it variously illustrated, and the truth thereof inculcated, while, at the same time, the primary and special end of the death of Christ, with respect to the elect, is clearly proven and established.

“(1.) Then this appears from express Scripture declarations concerning the objects of this death. It was for men—for all men—for every man—for the whole world. And although Arminians make use of these Scriptures to support their anti-scriptural tenet of Christ’s dying equally for all (which is most evidently contrary to the whole of the gospel), yet this cannot warrant a total rejection of these Scriptures, or explaining them away, by denying that they are true in any sense whatsoever, even in this their extensive view.

“(2.) This appears from Scripture typical representation; such as (1.) The sacrifices under the law, upon the head whereof particular persons, and the high priest, in name of the congregation, were to lay their hands, denoting a typical transferring of their guilt over upon the sacrifice, which all the congregation had a right and claim to do. And so, in a special manner, on the day of Atonement, the high priest confessed the sins of all the congregation, over the head of the scapegoat, &c. (2.) There was the city of refuge, which was appointed for every man-slayer to flee to, who killed his neighbour

unawares. And though it was certain that they who fled not thither could not be benefited by it, yet was every such one called to believe the appointment, and, in the faith thereof, to flee thither, with confidence of safety, founded upon the divine appointment, promise, and call, without meddling with or diving into any secret purpose of God, as to who they are whom the Lord has by his decree determined to get safety there. Thus Christ, as a Man-Saviour, is ordained or appointed *for men, as the great ordinance of God for their salvation*, and is the city of refuge, fitted, through the shedding of his blood, as the price of redemption, and opened in the gospel unto every law-condemned sinner, to whom the tidings come, to flee thither, and take shelter under the covert of blood, from avenging wrath, and all the charge of a broken law, in the confidence of the full payment of their debt and satisfaction made to justice for their guilt, by this atoning blood. (3.) The same may be said with reference to the brazen serpent, lifted up in the wilderness for every one bit by the fiery serpents. In all which I humbly think there is evidently held forth an universality of objective destination in respect of *claim*, and as a *foundation or encouraging ground* of our making use of the remedy, which yet is very consistent with the special destination, with reference unto the actual participation of the benefit.

“(3.) This, I think, appears from the universal extent of the free and gracious promises unto gospel hearers: they are declared to be to them—to belong to them—to be left them; and therefore the blood of Christ, or Christ as crucified, must in the same

manner and respect belong to them, in regard it is only through this blood or death that the promise can in any way come unto us; and that Christ crucified is the great subject-matter of the promise; and as the promise is left us in a testamentary way, and is ratified by the death of the testator, what claim we have to the one, we necessarily have to the other.

“(4.) This appears from the initiating seal of the covenant, which is by divine warrant dispensed unto all the members of the visible church, and their children. The Lord has declared that many are called but few are chosen; and it is evident, both from Scripture and sad experience, that the most part of the members of the visible church do remain in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity; yet they have, by divine warrant, got the seal of the covenant dispensed to them, and therefore there is certainly somewhat sealed to them, seeing it will not, I hope, be alledged that the Lord will warrant the application of the seal where there is nothing to be sealed. And therefore it appears, hence, (1.) That baptised persons not only have the promise left them, but have the claim thereto sealed unto them, for their further encouragement to intermeddle therewith by faith, and so to enter into God’s rest; yea, (2.) That as the promises come to us through the blood of Christ, so in this ordinance we have a symbolical application of this blood, as an evidence of our claim thereto; as the door by which we are called to enter into the holiest, and so into the possession of all the fulness of God in Christ, as brought near in the great and precious promises through this blood of Jesus.

"(5.) This, I think, appears from the gospel call, to believe in the blood of Jesus for remission of sin ; and that Christ is set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood ; for if we are called to faith in the blood of Christ, then necessarily this blood, as the object of faith, must be brought within the reach of faith ; and this, I think, can only be in a divine record or testimony, as faith in its proper nature is the soul's *Amen* to the divine record, and so setting to the seal that God is true. And, therefore, my faith in the blood of Christ for the remission of my sins being built wholly on the divine record and warrant in the Word, and not in the least upon anything done by me, or wrought in me, must have a record to bottom on, or believe, even this blood, as the payment of my debt, a satisfaction to law and justice for me. And though it is not a mere historical faith of this universal ordinate, or appointed sufficiency, that I am called to, but a saving and justifying faith in this atonement ; and in this appropriation of faith, Christ, and his blood and righteousness become mine in a special saving manner, or I get saving possession of all, and am called to take this possession, even with full assurance of faith ; yet, as the universal appointed sufficiency is held forth to me in the Word of grace as a mean of this faith, so I am called thus to consider it, thus to mint, through grace, at improving it, for my encouragement in waiting on the Lord, and minting at stretching out the withered hand, looking to the author and finisher of faith for his making his own gracious revelation (may I so express it), as the womb from which he, by the power of his grace and Spirit, begets faith in the heart, and

thereby unites the soul to Christ. Thus, I think, is the case as to the many great and gracious promises, and our claim unto them; and I think the same is the case with respect unto this universal sufficiency of the death of Christ, held forth in the Word of grace.

“(6.) Though I own that sometimes the universal terms used in Scripture are to be understood of an universality as to kinds, yet I think it evident that in other Scriptures the universal terms must be understood as respecting individuals, according to the obvious scope and connection of purposes; one instance whereof may be seen in 1 Tim. ii. 1-6, where it is evident that the Apostle exhorts to pray, not only for men of all kinds or characters, but for all individuals of men, as appears by his specifying the individuals of one of the kinds,—for kings, and all that are in authority. And the motives made use of to enforce the exhortation are remarkable to the present purpose. (1.) That God will have all men to be saved; he wills this with a will of approbation; it is agreeable to his gracious nature. And hence he swears that he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they should repent, return, and live. A second motive I notice here made use of is v. 6, Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all; though it is certain he died only for the sake of the elect, and their salvation only was thereby intended; yet here his giving himself a ransom for all is laid as an argument for our praying for all men, and this is to me a clear evidence that all have some claim to this ransom; it is in some respect for them, otherwise I see not the force of the argument here used for our praying for them;



and how to express this in more clear or unexceptionable terms than its being for them, in respect of an ordinate or appointed sufficiency is what I have not yet been able to conceive. The depth is great, and the mystery high, that *vel verum loqui periculosum est*. And sure we need to fix the eye on the compass of divine revelation, with an humble dependence upon the Spirit of truth when launching out into this infinite ocean.

“ A second Scripture I mention is 2 Cor. v. 19, 20, 21, where it is evident, (1.) That the word of reconciliation is to be preached to every man, declaring their access to return to God, as a reconciled God in Christ, in whom this reconciliation is had, in a way of not imputing their trespasses to them, which is the same with imputing righteousness without works. (2.) We have thereupon here a solemn call unto all and every one who hears this gospel to be reconciled to God. And the argument used to enforce the exhortation is, for he hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us, &c., where the nature and scope of the reasoning does evidently proclaim, that they who are thus called are such as have a claim to Christ, as made sin for them, which they are here called by faith to improve, as the only way of reconciliation with God; and that it is only by faith's apprehending Christ either explicitly, or more implicitly, as thus laid before them in the word of reconciliation, that sinners will be reconciled to God.

“ In a word, the blood or satisfactory death of the Lord Jesus Christ,—the promises of the gospel,—the commission that Christ has to save sinners, and the name of Christ,—held forth in the gospel, as the foundation of the faith of sinners, are all of equal

extent with respect unto their objects. And all this was agreed, determined, and ordained in the eternal Council of Peace, where the whole plan of salvation was agreed on, as to the purchase, exhibition, and application thereof. The determination was then made, both as to the special proper objects, for whose sake all was to be done and revealed, to whom the saving benefit shall certainly be applied; and these are the elect only. And as to the objects who were to have a *general claim to all*, for the encouragement of all to believe according to the revelation made to them in the gospel, and so for opening a door of faith to all, in order to, and as a mean which the Lord would bless for bringing the elect to enter by this door, as seeing it set open to all; so that they should stand in no need of diving into God's secret purposes for a warrant or ground for their faith.

“Upon all which, I cannot find freedom to assent to the Act of the very Reverend Synod on this head, in so far as it seems to exclude even that general claim to, or concern with the death of Christ, which is above endeavoured to be held forth, as clearly founded upon Scripture, and the analogy of faith.

“II. With reference to the seventh article (which I shall essay to declare my difficulties anent, before touching upon the sixth, because of the connexion of purposes,) I own that at the time of passing the Act, what is therein declared of the equal claim, that mankind-sinners as such (and so all mankind) have unto Christ, in the relation of a Kinsman-Redeemer, and to the promises of eternal life through him in the gospel, &c., this abstractedly considered gave

me much satisfaction ; yet, when considering what is there contained, as standing in connexion with the declared intendment of the Act, and with the above articles of the Act, as also upon further reflection upon this article, even as it stands, I cannot help labouring under difficulties with reference thereto.

“ As (1.) While the Synod seem to have laid the former articles, as in every sense whatsoever to exclude the claim of all to the blood of Christ as shed for them, I cannot reconcile this with their claim to him as a Kinsman-Redeemer. How I can claim a relation to him as a Kinsman-Redeemer, and yet have no claim, in any sense whatsoever, unto the price of redemption, which he has in that capacity laid down, is above my conception. And I can as little reconcile this with the claim, that mankind-sinners as such have to the promises, in regard that all promised mercies are the purchase of this blood, all the promises are ratified by this blood ; the testament is made of force by the death of the testator ; and it is only by this gate of the blood of Jesus that we have access into the gracious presence of God, and so to the enjoyment of any saving blessing promised ; and therefore, to deny all manner of claim to the blood of the Lord Jesus, as the payment of our debt, appears to me to be a shutting of the gate, while inviting to come into the house of mercy. I own and believe, that there can be no saving efficacy of this blood reaped but by faith ; but as faith is just the soul's entering by this door, so in order hereto, this door is set open to all, or Christ as crucified, as the only foundation of faith, is brought within the reach of the faith of all.

“(2.) Neither can I reconcile this absolute seclusion of all manner of claim to the death of Christ, with what the Reverend Synod declare of the claim of all unto the promises of life and salvation through Christ. It is most certain from Scripture, that as the promises are the declaration of the divine purpose of love, as to what shall have an actual accomplishment, they can properly belong to the elect, and them only: (And hence several divines, I suppose, of no small note in the Church, have in like manner excluded all but the elect from any claim to, or concern with, the promise.) And yet, clear it is from Scripture, and justly asserted by the very Reverend Synod, that mankind-sinners as such, have a claim to the promises; yet such as is very consistent with the special design of love with reference to the chosen of God.

“(3.) While the Reverend Synod seem to maintain, that all the encouragement unto mankind-sinners, as such, that is to be had in the death and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, lies in *the justice-satisfying, and law-magnifying nature of this righteousness, as containing the utmost of what law and justice can require for repairing the whole breach of the covenant of works, and fulfilling the same, in order to the justification and salvation of mankind-sinners as such, who are warranted to betake themselves thereto by faith.* As it is certain that this atonement and righteousness is the only security from wrath, and ground of confidence before God, for remission of sin and eternal life: so when the Synod here declare the warrant that mankind-sinners, as such, (which necessarily includes every man,) have to betake themselves by

faith to this righteousness for their justification and salvation ; this taken by itself, would seem to grant all that is desired on the head ; were it also granted, that this righteousness is brought within the reach of a particular applying faith, as it is faith. And, as I own, my darkness with reference to the Act of Synod, lies very much here ; so the grounds of my difficulty are, (1.) That as love is an uniting grace, in the exercise whereof the soul does really betake and cleave to the Lord Jesus Christ, so I find many, when explaining this duty and exercise of accepting Christ, betaking to him, &c., do speak of it in such terms, as are evidently expressive of love, desire, delight, &c. And though all these take place wherever faith is, and wherever these truly are, there is true faith, (they being all and severally the fruits of it,) yet faith is surely a distinct grace from love ; and therefore there is great need to rid marches between them, especially in an Act of this kind and design, and after so long and many ways confounding them in the church, to the great darkening of gospel truth. (2.) Faith, as such, must always terminate upon a record or testimony : and thus saving faith is described in Scripture as *believing the record of God, &c.* And where the sinner by faith apprehends good to himself, or takes hold thereof, this good must be brought within the reach of this particular applying faith, in a record bearing the sinner's claim thereto. And this the Lord is at much pains to clear up and establish in his word, that *Unto us a child is born, &c. To us he is sent to bless us.* And so as to his death, and blood, and righteousness, wrought out in his obedience and

suffering; this is his name, *the Lord our righteousness*; *He gave himself a ransom for all*. But as the Synod's Act seems to exclude all manner of concern in, or claim to the death of Christ, as for the man in particular, until he believe, I cannot see the access left for this applying faith.

"(4.) I confess myself very much diffculted anent what the Reverend Synod have in this seventh article, with reference to what law and justice have respect unto, in the case of a sinner's justification: That it is *only unto the justice-satisfying, and law-magnifying nature of this atonement and righteousness, in behalf of every sinner who is found betaking himself thereto by faith, &c.* I own, and through grace believe with the Reverend Synod, that law and justice in this matter of justification, have no respect unto God's sovereign counsel about what persons belong to the election of grace. I own that it was for the elect's sake alone, that Christ made satisfaction, and fulfilled all righteousness; but that there was no kind or manner of intention in the giving of this satisfaction, with reference to others beside the elect, (for whose sake it was given,) is what I cannot see reconcileable with Scripture, and the analogy of faith; while in Scripture the Spirit of the Lord is at much pains to open the door of faith unto gospel hearers, particularly in this manner, even by showing their claim unto this blood; so that as really as we are allowed and warranted to close with the promises by the amen of faith, as they are laid before us in the gospel, as belonging to us, left to us, and as in them, the Lord speaks unto us; so really we may and ought to apprehend this blood

as brought near within the reach of our faith, even by the amen of faith, unto the divine testimony concerning this blood, as shed for us, for the remission of our sins, or concerning Christ *as delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.* And yet the special intention of both the promises and atonement is the salvation of the elect and them only. That this atonement and righteousness is the only plea of the condemned sinner before the bar of law and justice, is a most certain truth; but that law and justice in dealing with a sinner, in the matter of justification, has no respect unto the relation in which the sinner stands unto the atonement and righteousness, but only to their justice-satisfying and law-magnifying nature, is what I own I cannot understand, nor reconcile with the tenor of Scripture.

“ I desire to entertain a deep and humbling sense of my weakness and readiness to mistake my way, and particularly to mistake the meaning of the very Reverend Synod, to whom I owe all dutiful regard and subjection in the Lord. And as the matter under consideration is of very great moment, and nearly concerneth the Lord’s glory, the interest of truth, and edification of souls, I beg leave freely to unfold my mind on this, if it may tend through the divine pity and blessing, either to the satisfaction of the Synod, or my conviction, so far as in a mistake in these weighty matters. So then, (1.) I hope it will be allowed, as evident from Scripture, that when the law is set home upon the conscience for awakening the sinner, it deals particularly with him as a debtor to do the whole law, and as criminally guilty of the violation thereof in every part. *Thou art the*

man, &c. And therefore, I see not what answer can satisfy the law, with reference to that man, but what is particular as suiting the indictment; or how the conscience, God's depute, can be satisfied with anything, but what is relevant in law for the man's absolution from the particular indictment laid against him. His betaking himself to the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, is his opposing the same to the law charge. But how can he with assured confidence, (which he is called to) plead this righteousness for his absolution from such a particular charge, without seeing his claim thereto, as righteousness for him? Especially, how must he be deterred from this, when he is told that he has no claim, no relation to this righteousness till he believe? So (2.) the Scripture speaks of sin as a debt, and justification as an absolving from, or discharge of debt, *forgiving our debt*; for which we are taught to pray. Now, as it is only through the satisfaction for the debt made by the Surety that our debts are forgiven, so I cannot see how we can exercise an applying faith upon this satisfaction, but by looking upon it as a satisfaction for our debt in particular; which, therefore, we are warranted to do; and for that end, this satisfaction is brought within the reach of such a faith, in the declaration of our claim thereto, and concern therewith. Even as it is the case with respect unto the promises, which are not ours in a saving manner, or in which we have no saving interest but in the way of believing; yet are ours to be believed as ours, rested in as belonging to us, as they are in Christ, yea and amen; by which faith we take possession of our own mercies, and enter into rest. So (3.)



without doubt it is all and only they, who by faith, betake themselves unto this righteousness that are justified. But as I am very sure the Reverend Synod never meant, that our act of believing is the ground of our justification, but that our betaking ourselves to this righteousness, is our pleading or improving this righteousness at the bar of law and justice as the only ground of our absolution; so this clearly shows, that faith takes up a law-right unto this righteousness, as held forth to the sinner, as indeed pleadable by him for his absolution from his debt; and, therefore, for this end, and that the door of faith might be set open to all, these universal expressions are set forth in Scripture, such as, *That Christ gave himself a ransom for all, died for all, &c.*, even that for the sake of the elect, and whatever other purposes of the divine glory were determined in the Council of Peace. And in a particular manner, that the elect might see the foundation of their faith of remission of sins, through the blood of Christ laid plainly before them in the divine record, and might find no need of diving into the secret purpose of election, for a foundation of their faith; it was appointed or ordained that this blood or righteousness should be a sufficient foundation for the faith of all, unto which every one to whom the gospel comes has a claim of right, and is called to rest thereon by faith, as the payment of his debt; which plea shall be sustained in behalf of every one who thus doth propone it.

“I have thus in much weakness offered to the very Reverend Synod my poor and rude thoughts concerning this deep and tremendous mystery of the

extent of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, with reference to the objects thereof; anent which I can say I tremble at the thoughts of my darkness, and danger of turning aside to right or left hand, as also at the thoughts of differing from my reverend and dear brethren, either in conception or expression upon these heads. And may I yet hope that, in rich and sovereign mercy, the Reverend Synod may be directed to such measures as may issue in such an elucidation of the truth, and clearing matters on either hand, that it shall be found we are seeing eye to eye, with reference to these great things of God's law?

"I shall now proceed to the sixth Article in the Act, which relates to the benefits purchased by Christ, and our enjoyment of them. And here, I acknowledge, I find myself at a loss how to express myself, so as the Reverend Synod may have a view of what difficulties I labour under, with respect to this article (which restrain my assent to it), except in a way of expressing, at the same time, what appears to me to be the truth on this head. And, in general, with reference to this article, I think that what was advanced in reasoning, when the Synod were framing their Act, is evidently applicable to our excellent Standards, and particularly in the places referred to in this article, namely, that judicatures, in framing Confessions or Articles of faith, cannot be supposed to descend unto the more minute points of truth; but only to take notice of the great strokes or lines of truth, and principal leading Articles of our Faith. Here I think this very evident, and that the renowned compilers of our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, did confine themselves to the more immediate con-

cerns of salvation, when handling the doctrine of our misery by nature, and remedy by grace, as revealed in the Scriptures of truth ; yet all in a full consistency with comparatively lesser points of revealed truth, which have a more remote relation unto these great concerns. And so,

“(1.) I desire through grace, with my soul, to adhere to the doctrine of our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, mentioned and referred to in this article, as what has an evident respect unto the saving benefits purchased by Christ for and bestowed upon his chosen, in comparison of which all other benefits are indeed no benefits, except as these benefits, in themselves common, do come to the believer with a stamp of special love upon them, or with a special blessing.

“(2.) I believe that what is properly in its nature the purchase of Christ for mankind-sinners, as it is with reference unto the eternal concerns of souls (which is the subject-matter treated in our Standards) that the purchase is made ; so they are these special saving blessings, which are only to be enjoyed in the way expressed by the Reverend Synod in this article, yet in a full consistency herewith.

“(3.) It appears from Scripture, that the purchase of Christ does admit of a further and larger consideration, as

“(1st,) In general, the whole reward of his obedience and suffering appears to be thus viewed in Scripture ; and in the nature of things I believe it will be owned that what is a proper reward of a price paid, or of obedience and suffering gone through, may justly be called the purchase thereof. Though our Lord Jesus,

as the eternal Son of God, could stand in need of nothing for himself, being the one infinite God with the Father and Holy Spirit; yet having, in his infinite condescending love, undertaken the office of Mediator and Surety, he as New Covenant Head, took out (may I so express it) a new right to God as his God and Father, for the sake and behoof of his chosen; and so also a new right to all things: he is appointed heir of all things.

“(2dly,) As he was thus set up from everlasting, so he was then the Father’s delight, *rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men*, which, I think, does clearly point out that mediatory glory which he had with the Father before the world was.

“(3dly,) Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich; and therefore, in the fulness of time, he laid aside for a season that glory which he had with the Father before the world was, in order to his suffering of death. He made himself of no reputation, and humbled himself unto death.

“(4thly,) In his last public solemn prayer, recorded before his crucifixion, he prays in the view of his going through with the works, *I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now glorify me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the world was*. And after his resurrection, he tells his disciples, *ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?*

“(5thly,) Scripture is clear, that the committing all judgment unto him, giving all things into his hand, giving unto him all power in heaven and

earth, do belong to this glory: yea, who can express or conceive what belongs thereto? All the concerns of the divine glory are intrusted with him as the Father's honorary servant, in whom he will be glorified. All the concerns of the Church, both visible and invisible, which is his proper mediatory kingdom, in and over which he reigns as King in Zion; and all the concerns of the kingdom of nature and providence to be managed by him in a subserviency unto the concerns of his Church, his spiritual kingdom. As all this belongs unto his mediatory glory, so all this is the Reward of his suffering. *He humbled himself and became obedient to death, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, &c.*

"(6thly,) As all this is upon the footing of the eternal transaction between the Father and the Son, so it necessarily follows, that his dispensing what is thus given unto him, must be on the same footing, or according to the method and order, and for the various ends and purposes there agreed on and determined, for the glory of God and salvation of his chosen, for whose sake all things are.

"(7thly,) I think it is evident from Scripture, that the Lord Jesus as Mediator, and so as New Covenant Head, doth not only dispense, or give forth special saving blessings to his chosen, but common blessings also, or such as even those who are not of his seed are sharers of, and such as his chosen do partake of before an actual saving interest in him. Among many, I only mention these, namely, the gospel preached to them; the seal of God's covenant dispensed to them, according to the rule of his word; the strivings and common operations of the Spirit,

which they are privileged with, &c. &c. We see particularly, with reference to a gospel ministry, and the gifts and operations of the Spirit, that they are declared to be the fruits of the ascension of Christ. *Having ascended, he gave some apostles, &c. He hath shed forth this which we now see and hear: When the Spirit is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, &c.* Seeing it is as the New Covenant Head that Christ has ascended, it necessarily follows (according to Scripture), that in the same capacity he has given the gift of a gospel-ministry, and the gifts of the Spirit for discharging the same: All these worketh that one and self-same Spirit. And he has given the Spirit in his operations and influences even upon these who are yet unconverted. Conviction of sin is the work of the Holy Ghost, as sent from the Father, by the Son as our ascended Lord.

“(8thly,) It will, I am persuaded, be owned, that Christ as New Covenant Head is the Head and King of the Church, both visible and invisible. And hence it natively follows, that not only the one, but also the other, do partake of the influences of his government, though of a very different nature, according to their state; the one special and saving, the other common, and which are not necessarily connected with salvation. The Jews were growing in the good olive, yet because of unbelief some of the branches were broken off, and the Gentiles were grafted in among them. By all which it evidently appears, that as there is a special and saving union and communion which believers have with Christ; so there is a common union, which the members of the visible church have with him, which is also

accompanied with common influences bestowed on them. The truth is evident from divine revelation, but the mystery is great. Sound and unsound professors are in Scripture spoke of under the character of outer and inner court worshippers ; yet both outer and inner court belong to the Temple, and the worshippers in both do enjoy temple privileges, which I cannot see the unsuitableness of calling privileges belonging to, or flowing from, the New Covenant.

“(9thly,) Though it is certain, that all who have not a saving interest in Christ, are under the curse, as to their spiritual state, being yet under the law as a covenant of works, and of the works of the law, seeking righteousness thereby ; yet it is no less plain from revelation, that many such are brought under a New Covenant dispensation, so as to enjoy many privileges, blessings, and dignities thereof, and upon the footing of it. *Who is like unto thee, Israel ? a people saved by the Lord, &c.* The Jews had much advantage every way, chiefly that unto them were committed the oracles of God. I own myself at a loss how to order thoughts or words, with reference to the mysterious dispensation. It is a certain and sad truth, that the unbeliever, as to his state, is cursed in all he is, and has, and does ; yet, (1.) The good things he enjoys, and particularly gospel privileges, are blessings in themselves, and as such are given forth by Christ as the fountain of blessing, for the purposes of the divine glory. (2.) They are sent as blessings to the persons who enjoy them, particularly in so far as they are means and encouragements to lead them to faith in Christ, in whom men are blessed, though the most part to

whom they are sent do reject the blessing, and like Esau despise their birth-right. (3.) I observe, that what in one respect is sent as a judgment and in wrath, with reference even to outward things, is, in another respect, declared to be sent in a way of compassion and for good. *Thus the Lord gave Israel a King in his anger*; and yet he tells Samuel, *That he had appointed Saul to save his people out of the hands of the Philistines; for he had looked upon his people because their cry was come unto him.* Thus, though all that unbelievers do is sin as done by them, yet not only is it material duty to attend ordinances of divine institution, but they are what sinners have encouragement to attend with hope of success therein, as they are the means of the Lord's appointment, for bringing to acquaintance and fellowship with him: and how this can be on any other footing than that of the Covenant of Grace, and the purchase of Christ, I cannot understand.

“(10thly,) The metaphor of a great house in which there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earth: and some to honour, and some to dishonour, is applied by the Holy Ghost unto the Church of Christ. And from the reasoning there, it is obvious, that as the master of the great house has interest in all the vessels in his house, to whatever purpose they are appointed; so the Lord Jesus, as Head of His Church, has a title to the members thereof, though they are appointed, some to honour, and some to dishonour. And hence in the call given to *feed the Church*, as it respects the members of the Church without distinction, so the argument to enforce it is, *which he hath purchased*



*with his own blood.* Whence it appears, that as Christ hath a right of purchase unto the whole Church visible and invisible, so the blessings conferred on them are upon the footing of this purchase.

“(11thly.) I cannot but own my difficulty anent the distinction, or term used in this article, as to actively receiving, enjoying, or using benefits: and that in regard, (1.) It is evident, that believers do enjoy many special benefits, which yet they may be (at least more properly) said to enjoy passively, rather than actively. (2.) In regard the common hearers of the gospel may be said to have some way an activity in their enjoying or using of gospel benefits and privileges, which are such as I dare not exclude from having any relation unto the death and satisfaction of Christ, as that whereby they are purchased.

“Upon all which grounds, I find myself obliged, for my exoneration to declare, that I cannot acquiesce in the foresaid Act of the very Reverend Synod, as the said Act stands; and crave, that this my Dissent, and Reasons thereof, may be recorded, and an extract thereof allowed me, and thereupon take instruments.”

Such is the long and elaborate paper of dissent given in by Thomas Mair to the Synod, which met in March 1755, containing his reasons for not acquiescing in the Act against Arminian errors. To this document objections were made, similar to those urged against his former paper of dissent, viz. that it was too general, and not sufficiently direct and pointed in opposition to the articles impugned. Mr Mair was therefore, after long and earnest dealings,

requested to withdraw his paper, or to present one with "direct and plain assertions as to what he held in contradiction to these articles." Mr Mair refused to withdraw it; and from an account of the matter published by himself, it appears that his refusal did not arise from any discourtesy to his brethren, or from any wilful obstinacy, but was owing simply to there having been nothing offered to satisfy his conscience "anent the invalidity of what he apprehended to be just grounds of his dissent." "The chief theme insisted upon (says he) was,—*In what sense it was that Christ died for all mankind?* This I had essayed to declare my mind about in my reasons of dissent: And many times, in answer to the repeated query, I told my view of it, namely, that it was *in respect of ordinate or appointed sufficiency for men, in contradistinction from fallen angels.* And as I declared my view of some of the Scriptures, where the universal terms of *all*, and *every man*, and *whole world*, did appear to me, according to their scope to point to mankind in general as such; so the explaining this *universality* by that of an *ordinate sufficiency* seemed agreeable to the words of the Spirit of God, Heb. v. 1, 4, 5. "Every High Priest taken from among men is *ordained for men*; so also Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." To this purpose I spoke from time to time, as that question was repeated; but as if either I had made no answer at all, or spoke on another subject, still the question was repeated, I believe, about twenty times, and the demand renewed, that I should explain myself *in what sense*

*Christ died for all mankind?* I told them that which I had said contained all the view I had hitherto reached in this mysterious subject, only added, that I further find in Scripture, That Christ is said to have *bought even those who bring upon themselves swift destruction*, which I think does further determine the *extensiveness* of the Scriptures with reference unto the *appointed sufficiency*. After being in this manner long and much urged to say more, I asked what the Synod would have me to say. Would nothing please unless I brought out some error, that they might get a plain handle against me? To this, so far as I remember, no return was made, but the former explicatory method renewed, till at length a member explained what they designed by these interrogatories, by saying that he would have Mr Mair to bring out his whole scheme of principles, and thus tell plainly what he held." \*

From the minutes of Synod, as well as the above statements, it is abundantly evident that considerable difficulties were experienced as to how to bring this matter to a comfortable close. The Synod, as has been already stated, strongly pressed Mr Mair to withdraw his paper of dissent, or to furnish them with something more palpably and pointedly opposed to the articles of the Act. This, we have seen, he declined to do, which led Mr Moncrieff to propose that the following seven propositions should be regarded as Mr Mair's tenets, if he himself failed to explain his sentiments more fully to their satisfaction.

I. That in the Covenant of Grace, our Lord Jesus

\* Review of the Procedure of Synod, &c.

Christ came under the relation of an Undertaker and Surety Priest for all and every one of mankind.

II. That Christ died for all and every one of mankind, or laid down his life as a ransom for them in their room and stead; and that without this objective destination of the ransom for each of them, it is not brought within the reach of their faith, or rendered pleadable by them for justification.

III. That as there is a special redemption by the death of Christ respecting only the elect as such, so there is a common redemption by his death respecting all mankind-sinners as such; and that only this common redemption, as distinguished from the special, is proposed by the gospel unto mankind-sinners as such, or is immediately set forth unto the faith of gospel hearers.

IV. That though the intercession of Christ be of the same extent in respect of its objects, with the special redemption, yet it is not of so large an objective extent as the common redemption wrought by his death.

V. That though the death of Christ hath a necessary, inseparable, certain, and infallible connexion with, and efficacy for the actual and complete salvation of those for whom he died, as in the way of special redemption, yet his death hath no such connexion with, and efficacy for, the salvation of those for whom he died as in the way of common redemption.

VI. That there are some benefits of redemption, or of Christ's purchase, whereof men are made partakers without an effectual application thereof by the Holy Spirit; without faith in Christ, union to him, or enjoyment of him; and without ever

being brought forward to the full enjoying of Christ with all his benefits.

VII. That in the case of a sinner's justification, law and justice have partly a respect to the particular objective destination of Christ's satisfaction and righteousness, in the transaction of the New Covenant, as necessarily belonging to the pleadableness thereof at the bar of law and justice ; so that the formal ground and reason of faith doth partly lie in this particular objective destination or intention of Christ's satisfaction and righteousness.

These propositions, drawn out by Mr Moncrieff, Mr Mair refused to acknowledge as a correct exhibition of his views, and accordingly gave in the following answers :—

“ As to the *first*, I answer—That the Lord Jesus Christ did, in the Covenant of Grace, formally stand and act as the undertaking Head and Surety Priest for the elect, and them only, whom he engaged to purify unto himself as his peculiar people : yet, on the other hand, Revelation warrants to say, that it was determined in that infinitely glorious transaction, that every one to whom the gospel comes, should have free and full access and warrant to make application by faith unto him as their Undertaker and Surety Priest ; for which end he is thus held forth to them by the gospel as a Man-Saviour, the Saviour of all men.

“ To the *second*—That as the Lord Jesus Christ, as the second Adam and Head of the New Covenant, did properly undertake for the elect, and them only, as his seed ; so he died only for their behoof, or for

their sake. Yet, in a full consistency herewith, and as a mean of the accomplishing their salvation, it was ordained in that eternal transaction, that this, his death, should be held forth to every one to whom the gospel comes, as the foundation of their faith; and which they are called to appropriate as for them, without diving into the secret divine purpose as to the objects for whose sake he died.

“To the *third*—That there is but one price of redemption paid; the direct and special design of which, with reference to men, was the salvation of the elect, and them only; which price of redemption is so held forth in the Word of Grace, in pursuance of the eternal Counsel of Peace, as to afford full ground and encouragement to every hearer of the gospel, by faith, to claim this price or satisfaction as the payment of their debt.

“To the *fourth*—That the intercession of Christ is of the same extent with his satisfaction, as to all the ends and purposes thereof, whether as to the effectual application of salvation to the elect, or as to whatever is conducive thereto; and particularly as to what benefits, privileges, and blessings, gospel hearers should enjoy for the behoof of the elect.

“To the *fifth*—That the direct, great, and special design of the death of Christ, with respect to the elect, shall have a certain accomplishment in their salvation, and hath a certain and infallible connexion with and efficacy for the same; yet the general claim that gospel hearers have unto this death of Christ, has not that infallible connexion or efficacy for their salvation, but shall surely reach all the ends for which it is bestowed upon them.

“ To the *sixth*—That the benefits of redemption purchased by Christ, are partaked of only by the effectual application of them to us by his Holy Spirit, by his working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in effectual calling; and all who enjoy these are brought forward to the full enjoying of Christ with all his benefits: yet, in a full consistency herewith, as Christ has not only an essential and necessary right to all things as the Son of God, but a purchased right to all things as Mediator, or a right and possession which is the reward of his sufferings as Mediator; so by virtue thereof, he dispenseth many blessings to mankind, and especially to the visible Church, whereby they are greatly indebted to him, and they who hear the gospel have manifold encouragements to believe on him to salvation.

“ To the *seventh*—That as the charge of law and justice against the sinner is particular, so nothing can satisfy or stay the awakened conscience, or purge it from the guilt charged home upon it, but a particular answer, even the payment of the man's debt in particular; which yet, I own, is ordinarily but gradually attained to, as to an explicit view thereof; and is many times really looked and lippedened to more implicitly for a long time, before the soul is by grace brought to this explicit faith.” \*

On the above answers being given in, the Synod were as much at a loss how to proceed as before. “ The Synod (says Adam Gib) observed with surprise that this paper, instead of making any clearer discovery of his sentiments, as to wherein he differed

\* Extracted from the Minutes of the Associate Synod.

from them, did further involve and overcloud the same; while therein he neither absolutely refused nor acknowledged any of these positions.”\*

After long reasoning, the demand was renewed, either to drop all opposition to the Synod's Act, or to explain himself more unambiguously. Neither the one nor the other being done, a committee was appointed to prepare an overture on the subject, to be presented at a subsequent sederunt. The overture was produced, containing the following statement, purporting to be a just exhibition of Mr Mair's doctrine: “That besides the special objective destination and intention of our Lord's death respecting the elect, there was some kind of general or universal objective destination and intention thereof, in the transaction of the New Covenant. That in some sense Christ was made sin for all the hearers of the gospel, and made satisfaction for the sins of all those to whom he is exhibited by the gospel; yea, that in some sense Christ died for all mankind, or shed his blood for them, making a full payment of their debt, and a satisfaction to justice for their guilt by some kind or manner of intention in his making satisfaction: And that this universal objective destination of the death of Christ, necessarily belongs to the ground upon which sinners may be invited to Christ, and necessarily belongs to the pleadableness of Christ's satisfaction at the bar of law and justice; so that the sinner's plea to be proponed and sustained at the bar of law and justice is a claim of right to Christ's blood, arising from the foresaid universal objective

\* Display, vol. ii. p. 144.



destination; and that an excluding all such concern in, or claim to the death of Christ, as for the man in particular until he believe, leaves no access for an applying faith: And that the purchase of Christ admits of a further and larger consideration than is treated of in our Standards."

When this overture was read, Mr Mair, Adam Gib states, did not offer to allege that any injury was done to him or his paper by charging these tenets upon it. Being averse to contend with his brethren without evident necessity, Mr Mair admits that he silently waited the issue, although he complains that the Synod did not ascertain the accuracy of the representation contained in the overture by comparing it with his reasons of dissent, and that they hurriedly came to a decision, which took him by surprise. The decision was,—“ That the Synod did strictly prohibit him from teaching, or venting any tenets or opinions contrary to the Articles of truth asserted in the Act of Synod dissented from; and particularly from venting or teaching the above and such other tenets, or opinions, which were evidently subversive of our received and sworn-to Standards of doctrine: As also, they appointed him to evidence his falling from the teaching or venting of those tenets and opinions, by withdrawing his paper of dissent against the next meeting of Synod; with certification, that if he should persist in refusing to do so, the Synod would find themselves obliged to proceed to censure against him.” In addition to this finding, they appointed a committee to converse with him between that and next meeting of Synod. The deliverance being intimated to him, Mr Mair said,

“ That he could not be bound up from preaching and teaching what he apprehended to be the truths of God.”

This decision was given in March 1755. The next meeting of Synod was in August, when the committee reported, “ That they had held a long conference with Mr Mair, upon the principles or tenets advanced by him in his paper of dissent, and specified and condemned in the Synod’s act relative thereto, but without effect.”\* As to the nature of this conference, Mr Mair informs us—“ That much of the time was spent in repeating the query, In what sense it was that Christ died for all men? and that he endeavoured to represent his mind as formerly.” The committee having presented their report, the Synod attempted, as on previous occasions, to induce Mr Mair to agree to the Act complained of; but he still kept firm to his purpose, having “ no freedom to fall from” his dissent. Another weary conference issued in the appointment of another committee, which terminated in a proposal, “ That if he was now in a readiness to desire further time for considering upon the present affair, and an opportunity of further converse with a committee of Synod upon the subject, betwixt, and their next meeting; and to submit, in the meantime, to the prohibition of the Synod’s act concerning him, as to an abstaining from teaching the opinions therein referred to, and keeping them to himself, if he cannot fall from them: That then the Synod should presently rest in appointing a committee for the said

\* Display.

converse, and renewing the said prohibition." To this proposal Mr Mair could not agree. He had no objections to converse on the matter with his brethren, but could not do so in connexion with a prohibition to teach what he conceived to be the truth. The Synod then proceeded to suspend him from the office of the ministry, with certification, that a higher censure should be inflicted, if need were, at their next meeting. Having entered his protest against this sentence, Mr Mair retired; nor did he appear again before the Synod, until summoned by the clerk to attend. In answer to the inquiry of the court, he acknowledged he had not obeyed the sentence of suspension; while he intimated that he still adhered to his opposition to the Act against Arminian errors. During the proceedings on this occasion, Adam Gib relates, that Mr Mair asserted, in the strongest terms, "That our Lord Jesus Christ died as a Surety Priest, in some sense, for reprobates,—for Judas, as well as for Peter." This, certainly, was not the mode in which Mr Mair was accustomed to express himself; and, in examining into the matter, as narrated by himself, we find, that when he was so exhausted with answering questions as to be obliged to sit down for relief, being scarcely able to think or speak, that then, in these circumstances, a brother did "cry to him, Did you not say to me, *in private*, that Christ, as a Surety Priest, died in some sense for all mankind?" As this query, says Mr Mair, "respected the *capacity* in which our Lord Jesus suffered *death*, my answer was, that no doubt, whoever were the objects of his death, or *whatever* is to be said as to that

matter, Christ could not *suffer* in a private personal capacity, but in the capacity of a Surety Priest." This reply, it would seem, was deemed decisive, so far as this charge was concerned; and the Synod accordingly considered that his case was becoming of a more aggravated description; but, "in order to show their lenity, and their sincere desire to reclaim him from the erroneous and pernicious tenets which he had adopted and openly maintained in face of the Synod," the Synod, says Adam Gib, went no further than appointing a committee to converse and deal with him, betwixt that and their next meeting, renewing the certification of higher censure, if no satisfaction were obtained.

The Synod of April 1757 arrived, and the same dealings were renewed as on former occasions, with precisely the same results, the Synod being surprised at Mr Mair, and Mr Mair being surprised at the Synod. Another attempt, however, was made to terminate the strife. An overture was introduced to the following effect,—“That in order to remove Mr Mair’s difficulties, and to give him all satisfaction as to the gospel offer and call, the Synod declare that they adopt the following expressions on that head, which are contained in the *Illustration*\* of the grounds upon which the Synod have laid him under the censure of suspension. “But true faith proceeds upon that testimony which the gospel bears concerning the person, offices, satisfaction, and righteousness of Christ, in themselves considered, with the intrinsic

\* “The drawing up of this *Illustration* was left upon me.”

Mr Gib’s M.S. note on the margin of his copy of the *Display*, vol. ii. p. 149.

suitableness and sufficiency thereof for the sinner, the offer of all made to him in the free promise, and the Lord's call requiring his acceptance thereof; and thus the good of the covenant is brought within the reach of a particular applying faith, in a record bearing the sinner's claim, or right of free access to the same. And herein faith acts most properly as faith, crediting, saying Amen, and setting to the seal to the divine testimony." And they likewise assert in Mr Mair's own words in his Reasons of Dissent, with a Review of the Procedure of Synod, &c., p. 103,—“That the door of the house of mercy is opened in the offer, and the call warrants to enter;” and by offer they understand “the whole of the revelation and exhibition of Christ unto us in the gospel, and so all his names of office and relation, all his words of grace and promise, as held forth to sinners of Adam's family, as such.” And this offer they own “is such as gives a claim of right unto what is offered, so as we have immediate warrant, by the confidence of faith, to take possession of these as our own mercies, and thus enter into rest by faith.”

“That Mr Mair retract, and give up with that tenet—That Christ's death was appointed for all men, as a ransom intentionally laid down *in the name and stead of every one*. And that he acknowledge that this tenet or opinion doth not belong to the ground upon which sinners may be invited unto Christ, nor to the pleadableness of Christ's satisfaction and righteousness at the bar of law and justice.

“That he own that he doth not take it upon himself positively and absolutely to determine that

the purchase of Christ admits of a further and larger consideration than is treated of in our Standards.

“ And that Mr Mair testify his acquiescing in this overture, by receiving his paper of dissent, returned out of the Moderator’s hands ; and the Synod, upon his so doing, take off the sentence of suspension, and restore him to ministerial communion with them as formerly.” \*

The above overture being introduced, and a long discussion having ensued, Mr Mair requested that the overture should be placed in his hands, to enable him more maturely to consider its contents. He was allowed to have it in his possession till a future sederunt. The case being resumed, he presented the following statement in writing:—“ As to the paper put into my hands by the Very Reverend Synod, containing a motion made to remove my difficulties, and to give me all satisfaction as to the gospel offer and call—

“(1.) I observed in my notes published, that the place cited from the Illustrations would indeed seem to agree with my sentiment on the head, as cited in the paper. But while there is in the context in these Illustrations what to me seems an evident contradiction of what otherwise charity would apprehend to be there meant, it would at least require a great deal more time, and more particular understanding of the mind of the Synod as to the consistency of one part of these with another, before I can declare my satisfaction on this head.

“(2.) As to the demand to give up with that tenet,—*That Christ’s death was appointed for all men*

\* Extracts from Minutes of Associate Synod.

*as a ransom, &c.*, I believe there may be still so much of mistake between the Synod and me, as hitherto we are not able to understand one another about it. And I desire not to act at a venture therein, though I have as plainly as I could declared what I think might satisfy.

“(3.) As to the common benefits, or the further and larger consideration of the purchase of Christ than is treated of in our Standards, I can say no more, but refer to the explication I gave of what I thereby intended in my reasons and notes on the Illustrations.

“(4.) As to falling from my dissent, there are other things beside the difficulties here specified, that stand in the way thereof, as may be seen in what I have published.

“May the Lord direct the Synod to what is indeed for his glory, the real maintenance of truth, and the good of souls, however I should sink under the pressures on me upon this mournful occasion.”\*

This new paper being read, a discussion followed, when it was proposed to delay taking additional steps in the business till next meeting of Synod, in order to afford Mr Mair time and opportunity to review the whole matter. Mr Mair, however, declaring he had no dubiety about his principles, the Synod proceeded to depose him from the office of the ministry, inasmuch as he had “declined to acquiesce in the overture proposed for bringing the affair to an issue, or to fall from venting and teaching his erroneous tenets, formerly condemned by the Synod;” and inasmuch as he had refused “to with-

\* Extracts from Minutes of Synod.

draw his dissent, and in regard he had hitherto disobeyed the former sentence of suspension."

On this sentence being inflicted, Thomas Mair addressed the Synod, declaring, amongst other things, that he adhered to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms; that he abhorred Arminianism in all its forms, whether more gross or refined, and in a particular manner the Arminian tenets upon the head of universal redemption; that he considered the Synod, in their proceedings, had either avoided entering into the merits of the cause, as to what it was to believe in the blood of Christ, and as to what claim gospel hearers have to this blood of atonement, in contradistinction to fallen angels; or that the Synod had in their statements upon the subject, run into the Neonomian scheme, by turning the gospel into a new law, or preceptive dispensation. He appealed, therefore, from their sentence, to the True and Faithful Witness, to be judged by him, in his own time and way.

With the delivery of this solemn declaration and appeal, the Rev. Thomas Mair took his leave of the Synod in April 1757. We cannot but follow with interest in the step he now took, a man who had taken so large a share in some of the most interesting and exciting scenes connected with the early history of the Secession. Besides protesting, as a minister of the Church of Scotland, against the sentence which drove the "Four Brethren" from the Establishment, he was present, as a spectator, along with Ralph Erskine, at their first meeting at Gairney Bridge, a few weeks after their expulsion. In company with the same distinguished brother,



Mr Mair gave in his adherence to the Associate Presbytery, "at the kirk of Orwell," in 1737, and was "cheerfully received," as it is stated in the Act concerning the admission of the Rev. Ralph Erskine and the Rev. Thomas Mair. In 1739, as the mouth of the Associate Presbytery, he read, in the presence of the General Assembly, the Declinature in which the Fathers of the Secession refused to acknowledge the authority of the judicatories of the Church of Scotland, or to answer to the libel which had been framed against them ;—upon the reading of which Declinature, the Associate Presbytery, who were present, retired from the Assembly to give God thanks for the "direction and assistance" they had received. Thomas Mair also was the Moderator who opened the Associate Synod in 1747, at which the division took place ; while he constituted, as Moderator, the first Synod of that branch of the Secession, from which, by a sentence of deposition, he was now expelled.

As to the character of the views which led to so painful an issue, we remark, that if the writings of Adam Gib be carefully examined, the difference between him and Thomas Mair on the subject of the atonement will be found to have amounted simply to this. Both held, to use their own language, the "appointed sufficiency," and Adam Gib repeatedly declared in Synod that he would hold no man to be erroneous for saying that in some sense Christ died for all, or that there was an ordinate sufficiency in the death of Christ for all mankind ; and Thomas Mair declared that this was the whole of what he meant. There was, however, this shade of difference

between them. Adam Gib's "appointed sufficiency" had reference to the atonement, as pleadable at the bar of law and justice by every sinner, on the ground of its *nature*; Christ's work being of a justice-satisfying and law-magnifying *nature*. Thomas Mair's "appointed sufficiency" made the atonement pleadable by every sinner at the bar of law and justice, not in virtue of its *nature* merely, but also in consequence of a divine appointment, empowering every sinner to plead it, as that which had been appointed or provided for himself, it being this divine appointment which constituted the foundation of an applying or appropriating faith. That may be suitable for us in its *nature* to which we have no manner of right or claim. A man in rags may see raiment just such as he needs, in its *nature* completely adapted to his case, meeting all his wants, and fitted to protect him from the cold and storm; but if this raiment be in no way prepared or intended, or provided for him, then, if he presume to appropriate it to himself, law and justice will step in to prevent it. In like manner, how can a sinner's claim to appropriate the robe of Christ's righteousness be maintained, if that robe has in no way or in no sense been wrought out for that sinner? If he venture to lay hold of Christ and of eternal life, will not law and justice, unless he happen to be an elect man, interpose? So thought Mr Mair, and therefore, he conceived that there must be in the death of Christ a universal ordinate sufficiency, a sufficiency growing not only out of the *nature* of Christ's work, but also out of a divinely appointed destination, making it pleadable by every sinner, as being appointed or provided for himself, to the

extent of laying the foundation of a claim and right to appropriate Christ and his salvation. Nor did Mr Mair, in contending for this objective intention in the death of Christ, wish to employ, in connexion with the general aspect of the atonement, those terms which orthodox divines have been in the habit of associating with the specialities of covenant arrangements. Boston, Hog, and Hamilton, with the rest who distinguished themselves in the Marrow Controversy, carefully avoided those modes of statement which implied that Christ was the Undertaker and Surety for all, or that he died in the room or stead of all. The reasons for this caution on their part have been already noticed in a previous chapter. But the Marrow-men adhered to the phrases, legal, destinated, ordinate, appointed, universal sufficiency, and others of a like nature. For example, Boston, in speaking of Christ as God's gift to all, says that he is given "in respect of legal destination," which "is more (he adds) than simple allowance to take him." \*

Hog, who wrote the preface to the Marrow, says "that the intrinsical worth of the purchase which is of infinite value might have reached the fallen angels, had it been *destinated for that effect*," but it has not, and since every "gospel minister may, and ought to say to every one of his hearers, if you in particular *shall see the Son and believe on him, you shall have everlasting life*," Mr Hog puts the question,—“What foundation for this general and particular offer can be assigned, distinct from a *suitable extent* of Christ's death and

\* Sermon, Isaiah ix. 6.

purchase?" \* Hamilton, in his Catechism, for which he was taken to task by Principal Hadow and others, speaks of there being in the death of Christ, "not only an absolute intrinsic sufficiency flowing from the divinity of the person of Christ, being God as well as man, but a *federal and legal sufficiency*, flowing from the fulness of the satisfaction given to the law and the law-giver, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, and the nature and will of God, requiring and *appointing the same*;" which "federal material sufficiency must at least be intended by these general expressions, viz. Christ giving himself a ransom for all; tasting death for every man; and being a propitiation for the sins of the whole world;" without which sufficiency he "cannot see how a full foundation can be laid for the external call of the gospel." Ebenezer Erskine, also, in his sermon on Heb. xi. 7, speaks of the intrinsic and *legal sufficiency* of the death of Christ that is to be held forth as the ground and foundation of faith to sinners of mankind;" and hence, adds he, "are these *universal* expressions in Scripture, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "Who gave himself a ransom for all."

Thus the Marrow-men employed the terms—legal destination—legal sufficiency; and appointed sufficiency in connexion with the universal expressions that are to be found in Scripture relating to Christ's

\* Remarks upon a Review of a Conference betwixt Epaphroditus and Epaphras, about Principal Hadow's Synodical Sermon, &c.

death, although they abstained from employing the terms—substitute, representative, and surety,—except in connexion with those passages which refer to the special aspect of the atonement. Now, there does not appear to be any ground to warrant the conclusion, that Thomas Mair was disposed to differ from the Marrow divines in regard to the use of terms; and, accordingly, he told a committee who conversed with him, that he thought he had the Associate Presbytery on his side, in their Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace. To this “it was objected against him, that the Associate Presbytery did expressly condemn universal redemption; to which Mr Mair replied, So do I likewise, in the same manner as they do; for they plainly tell what universal redemption is, which they condemned, by setting before us what the universalists hold, namely, *That Christ died for all mankind alike.*”

But while uniting with the Marrow-men in holding the doctrine of particular redemption, and in restricting the terms—substitute, representative, and surety, &c., to the elect, Mr Mair did not feel himself at liberty to express himself in the terms of the articles of the Act against Arminian errors, because these terms appeared to him to strike at the root of that common interest in the death of Christ which all mankind possess, and without which interest, he deemed it impossible to make out to any sinner the proper ground of an applying and appropriating faith. He was afraid the Synod, in avoiding the Arminian extreme, had fallen into an opposite one, which would prove injurious; and, as at that period the doctrines of grace were but little understood in

the Church of Scotland, he considered it the more necessary they should be maintained and exhibited by the Secession in all their fulness.

While it is due to Mr Mair to record the motives which influenced him in the course he followed, it is equally due to the Synod to observe, that they proceeded slowly and reluctantly, and that, in those days of strong party feeling, and of high notions of the powers and duties of church courts, they discovered a desire to act in his case on the principles of forbearance. "The Synod (says Adam Gib) was evidently forced to go forward with great reluctance in their proceedings against Mr Mair. Much time was spent upon tedious reasonings with him at many sederunts, in all their meetings but one through the course of three years, with a frequent employing of brethren, all along, in turns of prayer for divine light and pity.

"And though they were very desirous of his renouncing those new tenets which he had espoused, yet they never absolutely required this as the only satisfaction in which they could acquiesce; while he all along seemed unripe for being thus dealt with, by his labouring under a great confusion of thoughts upon the subject. But what they particularly and earnestly insisted for was, that he would keep such points to himself; or that he should drop his stated opposition to their Act, and should fall from the venting of such erroneous notions among the people, of which they required no other evidence but a withdrawing his paper of dissent. So that, in this way, they were willing to exercise forbearance with him."\*

\* Display, vol. ii. p. 148.

A few years after Mr Mair's deposition, overtures of accommodation were proposed, with the view of his being received again into the fellowship of those from whom he had been separated. The Rev. Alexander Moncrieff entered into these overtures with great cordiality, conceiving, from the conversations he had with him, that mutual explanations would, after all, completely remove the discrepancies that existed between them; but these overtures, owing chiefly, it is believed, to the death of Mr Moncrieff, failed in accomplishing their object. Retaining, however, the confidence and affection of his people, Mr Mair continued to preach at Orwell till his death in 1767; after which, at the earnest desire of his Session and Congregation, a course of sermons, preached by him, on "A Covenant of Duty nowise inconsistent with a Covenant of Grace," was published for the benefit of his widow, a woman of exemplary piety and prudence.

With Mr Mair's deposition, there was a cessation of doctrinal debates in the Anti-Burgher Synod, followed by a period of peace. In the General Assembly the case was different; for in 1786, Dr M'Gill of Ayr published his "Practical Essay on the Death of Christ," which became the occasion of much dispute in the judicatories of the Establishment. As to his views on the atonement, Dr M'Gill held neither the special nor the general reference. He denied the atonement altogether. The language of Scripture on this subject he regarded as figurative. Nothing more, however, was necessary on his part to save himself from ecclesiastical censure, than a few hollow concessions, such as no court would have

received, which was determined to uphold the truth upon so fundamental an article of the Christian faith.

And, as from this it appears the Church of Scotland was not improving in purity of doctrine, neither, we observe, was it gaining the affections of the people by a less rigorous enforcement of the law of patronage. Hence the deposition of the Rev. Thomas Gillespie of Carnock, in 1752, because of his refusing to take part in the violent settlements of that period. And hence, too, the demission, in 1759, of the son of the celebrated Boston of Ettrick, the Rev. Thomas Boston of Oxnam, who could not endure to remain in a church where such abuses prevailed. Along with the Rev. Thomas Collier, who formerly laboured in England, but who was called to Colinsburgh, these two ministers, the Rev. Thomas Gillespie and the Rev. Thomas Boston, formed themselves, in 1761, into the Presbytery of Relief.



## CHAPTER IV.

Happy re-union of the two branches of the Secession in 1820. Agreement to the Summary of Principles. Its reference to the Marrow. Instructions to frame a Testimony, containing a more extended Doctrinal and Historical Exhibition of the Principles of the Secession, embodying, amongst other things, the Substance of the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace. The appearance of this Testimony in 1827. Its contents so far as they relate to the Atonement.

THE expulsion of the Rev. Thomas Mair from the one branch of the Secession, threw him into occasional contact with the other, but without creating any new contention betwixt the two, which were happily reunited in 1820, after a separation of seventy-three years. The two Synods met at Edinburgh, the Associate or Burgher Synod in Portsburgh Church, and the General Associate Synod in their Synod house, Nicolson Street, whence they walked in procession to Bristo, which, as being the spot where the separation had taken place, was chosen for the scene of reunion. The Rev. Dr Jamieson, the senior moderator, gave out a portion of the 102d Psalm (17-22 verses), which being sung, he requested the clerk of the Synod, whom he represented, to read their last minute. The Rev. Robert Balmer, the junior moderator, then called upon the clerk of the Synod, to

which he belonged, to do the same. After the reading of these minutes, which had respect to the approaching union, the members of both Synods rose and stood while the articles of the basis of union were read. The senior moderator then said, "I declare in the name of the General Associate Synod, whom I represent, that the General Associate Synod is henceforth one with the Associate Synod." The junior moderator made a similar declaration in name of the Associate Synod, after which they gave to one another the right hand of fellowship, an expression of brotherly union and regard, in which they were followed by all the other members present. The Rev. David Greig, Lochgelly, being the oldest minister present, was now invited by the United Associate Synod to take the chair as moderator, which he did, and after giving out the 133d Psalm, constituted the meeting with prayer. Dr Pringle of Perth, who was next in seniority, and Dr Hall of Edinburgh, followed in leading the devotions of the Synod, and the exercises closed by the whole assemblage uniting in singing these lines, from the 147th Psalm:—

Praise ye the Lord; for it is good  
 Praise to our God to sing:  
 For it is pleasant, and to praise  
 It is a comely thing.  
 God doth build up Jerusalem;  
 And he it is alone  
 That the dispers'd of Israel  
 Doth gather into one, &c.

One of the first acts of the United Associate Synod was an agreement to a short "Summary of Principles." In this Summary the doctrine of Christ being

“the surety of his people,” is distinctly stated, while there is the following reference to the Marrow, which had been condemned by the General Assembly in 1720, exactly a hundred years before the period of the union.

“The ‘Marrow of Modern Divinity’ teaches that God in the gospel makes a gift of the Saviour to mankind-sinners, as such, warranting every one who hears the gospel to believe in him for salvation; that believers are entirely freed from the law, as a covenant of works; that good works are not to be performed by believers, that they may obtain salvation by them.’ In the unqualified condemnation of these principles, the General Assembly materially condemned some of the most important doctrines of the gospel, such as the unlimited extent of the gospel call, and the free grace of God in the salvation of sinners.”

In addition to the Summary of Principles, the United Associate Synod resolved to emit a Testimony, “historical and doctrinal,” in which, among other things, there should be embodied the substance of the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace,\* which we discussed in our second chapter. In the historical part of this Testimony, the following passage will be found:—

“Aware that the system of theological opinions, commonly called Legal or Arminian, prevailed extensively in the National Church, and convinced that the decisions of the Assembly, concerning the

\* The Act against Arminian errors, together with such documents as were emitted by the two branches of the Secession in their separate state, have no place in the Testimony.

propositions which were selected from the Marrow of Modern Divinity, had contributed to diffuse that system, the Seceders judged it to be their duty to explain and vindicate more fully than they had done in their Testimony, 'the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, and of our Standards, concerning the free grace of God in the salvation of mankind lost.' Accordingly, they published an Act, bearing the following title :—' Act of the Associate Presbytery concerning the Doctrine of Grace, wherein the said doctrine, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and agreeably thereto, set forth in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, is asserted and vindicated from the errors vented and published in some Acts of the Assemblies of this Church, passed in prejudice of the same.'

" This work, though it may sometimes perplex, by its numerous divisions and its technical phraseology, yet contains an able exposition and vindication of the doctrine of Scripture, concerning the free exhibition to sinners, indiscriminately, of Jesus Christ as the Saviour—their access as sinners to him, and their duty to improve that access—the nature of the faith by which the ungodly are justified—the freedom of believers from the law, as a law of works—their obligation to obey it as the rule of their conduct—and the motives which should influence them to yield that obedience.

" Scriptural views of these subjects are not less necessary for the enjoyment of peace and hope, than for the acceptable service of God : yet on few subjects are we more apt to err ; and as errors on these subjects are specious, they are peculiarly dangerous.

The grace of God and the merits of Jesus Christ may be highly extolled, and yet the way of obtaining an interest in them may be so represented as to depreciate both, by directing men to found their acceptance with God, or at least their right to trust in Christ for salvation, on their acquiring certain dispositions and experiences which shall distinguish them from others, and entitle them to divine favour.”\*

In the doctrinal part of the Testimony, we meet with the following passages under the head, “Concerning the extent of salvation :”—“The doctrine of Scripture on this subject, as stated in our Standards, is,—that all the individuals of the human race will not be finally saved—that the wicked shall be consigned to everlasting punishment in hell—and that those only who are sanctified in time, being the elect of God, for whom Christ died, shall be rendered eternally happy in heaven, Conf. ch. viii. § 5, ch. xxxii.-xxxiii. ; L. Cat. Q. 30, 31, 60, 61, 89, 90 ; S. Cat. Q. 19, 20, 37, 38. This doctrine is opposed in various forms.

“1. The widest departure from the truth is the opinion that the whole human race shall, either at the last day, or after a period of suffering in hell, be admitted to the benefit of Christ’s sacrifice, and thus be eventually saved.

“2. It is also a deviation from the truth to hold, that although all men shall not be saved, yet Christ, according to the purpose of God and his own intention, died for all men, actually expiating the guilt even of those who eventually perish.

\* Testimony, p. 55.

"3. The third, and apparently the least, erroneous form of holding the doctrine of universal redemption, but still not accurate in its terms, and as usually explained, inconsistent with Scripture, is, 'That Christ by his death placed all men in a salvable state.'

"The question here is, what is meant by a salvable state? In one sense, all men were in such a state,—that is, it was possible for them to be saved, not without an atonement, but in the way of its being appointed for them. The salvation of even fallen angels was thus possible, before God passed the sentence of hopeless perdition upon them, for his love might have fixed upon them, and he might have determined to glorify his mercy by admitting and providing a surety for them. On us he passed no sentence of hopeless perdition—for us he appointed salvation; but it was not the death of Christ that procured this love, or directed it to fix upon us; for the appointment of his death was a fruit of the love of God, and only the means of carrying its purposes into full execution, 1 John iv. 10. The death of Christ was not intended to render God placable, but actually to appease him; for, by the very purpose of salvation, God showed himself placable,—that is, capable of being appeased.

"If by placing us in a salvable state were meant that the anger of God is appeased by a true and complete satisfaction to justice, so that without reference to decrees which regulate intention, and determine the effect, salvation is open to all men; then, doubtless, it is true, that so far as *the requisitions of law and justice* are concerned, all obstructions are

removed, and every one may be called as welcome, and warranted to claim salvation on the ground of Christ's finished work, John vi. 49, 51; Rev. xxii. 17. But those who speak of our being placed in a salvable state, usually mean, that Christ's death hath rendered God placable by us, or hold that he so satisfied divine justice for the sins of all men, as to render it consistent with the honour of the Deity to propose lower terms of salvation than would have been otherwise requisite; and that to gospel-hearers these terms are faith, repentance, and sincere obedience.

“ When universal terms are used in speaking of the death of Christ, their meaning is usually determined by the context, which contrasts his sacrifice with the sacrifices of the Jewish dispensation, or refers them not to all individuals, but to all classes and descriptions of men, John i. 29; or to the whole of a particular class, Isa. liii. 6; Heb. ii. 9. Such terms express the *relation* of the death of Christ to the human race, as distinguished from angels, and to the common character of men as sinful and fallen beings, John iii. 14, 16. This character is universal, and therefore the death of Christ, as a sacrifice for sins, is suitable to all men. It is not more suitable to the elect than to others, for it was not their being ‘elect,’ but their being sinners, ‘children of wrath even as others,’ that rendered such a sacrifice necessary; and it is not their being elect, which they cannot know before having an interest in Christ, but their being sinners, that warrants them to claim the benefit of his death, Matt. xviii. 11; Luke xix. 10. Universal terms also declare the *sufficiency* of his

death, as adequate in intrinsic value to the salvation of all men, and therefore a proper basis for the universal call of the gospel. In reference to the *actual effect* of his death, such terms declare that there is no distinction of nations, ranks, or moral character,—that Gentiles as well as Jews—Kings and those in authority as well as subjects—the chief of sinners as well as the more temperate and moral, shall be saved by it—a vast multitude out of every kindred, nation, people, and language, 1 John ii. 2; Rom. iii. 9, 23, 29, 30; xi. 12; 1 Tim. ii. 1, 6; Rev. vii. 9.”

From these extracts, the doctrine of the Testimony on the subject of the atonement may be seen. Viewed in connexion with the purpose of God and his own intention, Christ died for the elect to secure their redemption. Christ's death, however, has a *relation* to mankind-sinners. It is suitable to all, and sufficient in intrinsic value to the salvation of all; its *sufficiency* in this respect being a *proper basis* for the universal invitations of the gospel. The passage in which it is affirmed that “salvation is open to all men,” and that, “so far as the requisitions of law and justice are concerned, all obstructions are removed, and every one may be called as welcome and warranted to claim salvation on the ground of Christ's finished work,” very clearly expresses the views of the Marrow-men, and almost in the language of Traill, to whom they appealed in support of their answers to the queries proposed to them by the Commission.

“Every man and woman (says Traill) that lives in this world, preach the gospel to them. What



gospel? Tell them that there is life and salvation for them in Jesus Christ, if they will believe it, well and good, and if not they shall be damned. You are to believe that there is no impediment or hindrance, neither on God's part nor thine, to hinder thee from partaking of Christ if thou be willing; this is a part of that faith that answers the faithfulness of God in the promise of the gospel, and which a poor creature should believe firmly, that there is no impediment on God's part, nor on my part, to hinder my partaking of Christ, according to God's offer, if I accept of him; the impediment on our part is sin; the impediments on God's part are the law and justice; the Lord hath declared these shall not stand; the law and justice stand in no man's way to hinder him from partaking of Christ, if he will accept thereof; neither shall sin hinder him; for the offer is made to all men as sinners, whatsoever they have been, and whatsoever they are."

The same doctrine is thus expressed in the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace,—"*As to the next condemned position, God the Father hath made a deed of gift and grant unto all mankind, that whosoever of them all shall believe in his Son shall not perish, but have everlasting life, will, indeed, bear a sufficiency of worth and merit in the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of all men, and the removal of all legal bars that stood in the sinner's way; and that Christ crucified is the ordinance of God for the salvation of mankind.*"

These quotations are from documents unanimously agreed to by the Marrow-men, and by the founders of the Secession. But a few specimens may be

given of the same doctrine, expressed by individuals among them, in nearly the same terms.

Ebenezer Erskine, in a sermon on Isaiah xliii. 21, says, "Christ, the second Adam, has magnified the law and made it honourable, and therefore it must needs follow, that all these impediments and bars in the way of our salvation are now removed, and the way is clear to every soul that has a mind to enter in by faith." John x. 9, "I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." All legal impediments arising from law and justice are now taken out of the way, and there is a free call to every man to enter in and be saved, in which case nothing can hinder but unbelief, which is a refusing to enter in by Christ; and they that do so, how shall they escape?"

And says Ralph Erskine, in his sermon on "Gospel Compulsion,"—"To come in imports that the door is open, and to compel them to come in is to cause them to know that there is an open door of access unto God—that the door of faith is open to the Gentiles—the door of faith is opened by the gospel—the door of mercy is open—the door of life and salvation."

"Consider again, for compelling you to come in, that every door of his house is open to you to come in, that his house may be filled. I am the door, says Christ; and in this everlasting gospel this door is opened, and there is no impediment to hinder your entrance. All impediments on God's part are actually removed; the law is fulfilled, justice is satisfied, wrath appeased, death vanquished by this Jesus."

To these specimens another may be added, from the Rev. James Fisher, one of the "Four Brethren," and whose name is so honourably associated with the Catechism, which was given to the world as one of the first-fruits of the Secession. In his sermon on "Christ Jesus the Lord, The inexhaustible matter of Gospel Preaching," Mr Fisher remarks—

"Again, to preach Christ is to declare that, in consequence of his finishing the great work of redemption, he is now made manifest, and, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: Rom. xvi. 26. So that there is nothing now either in law or justice to hinder the greatest sinner from receiving the 'unspeakable gift' of God, yea, on the contrary, all that hear this gospel are called, commanded, and beseeched to be reconciled unto God. 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.' 'Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth.'

These quotations, which might easily be multiplied, suffice to show, that the passage in the Testimony which states, that, "so far as the requisitions of law and justice are concerned, all obstructions are removed, and every one may be called as welcome and warranted to claim salvation on the ground of Christ's finished work," is in thorough harmony with the modes of statement common in the earliest and best periods of the Secession, and exhibits most faithfully the doctrine of the Marrow, there being, as Boston expresses it, "no impediment to the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ on Heaven's part."\* By the

\* Sermon, 1 John iv. 14.

appointment of God, or deed of gift, life and salvation are held out to the acceptance of every creature. This could not possibly be done, except in consistency with the claims of law and justice; and if so, if law and justice present no bar or obstacle to the making of the offer on God's part, they can present none to the acceptance of the offer on the part of the sinner; hence, the only barriers which now exist in the way of the salvation of any man to whom the gospel comes, are such as grow, not out of a broken and dishonoured law, but out of an unbroken and rebellious heart.

To the doctrine, that salvation is not only "open to all men," but that every one has now a right "to claim it, on the ground of Christ's finished work," certain objections have been urged. Why does not this right, if worthy of the name, bring along with it the possession of the blessing? The answer is, a man may have a right to that which he never claims, and therefore never enjoys. According to the Marrow-men, salvation is every man's by right in the gift, but no man's in the possession, except when claimed or received by faith. "This year (says Ebenezer Erskine, in his Sermon on the 'Annals of Redeeming Love') this year a charter for heaven and eternal life is put in every man's hand, with an express command from God to every man to take the benefit thereof by faith." "God," says Alexander Moncrieff, in his "Christ's Call to the Rising Generation," "God gives Christ, and faith receiveth him and hath him in possession; but he is given to many that do not receive him; and this is their unbelief, that they do not, and will not receive God's gift of Christ, and of

life in him. For, though Christ be given in possession only to those that by faith receive him, yet Christ, and life in him, is given unto all that hear the gospel, in the offer and right to put in your claim to Christ, and life in him, as yours; and every one of you is warranted to receive him as yours, and lay claim to him and all the blessings of his purchase as your own, in a way of grace."

This right of the sinner to claim or appropriate salvation, on the ground of Christ's finished work, has been insisted on in all periods of the Secession. It was, however, vehemently attacked, about the middle of last century, and particularly by Palæmon, in his "Letters upon Theron and Aspasio;" and in turning to a "Review of the Controversy" waged at that time, we find the following things, which we may quote:—

"From such texts as these, John vi. 32, and John v. 11, they would persuade us that God has given eternal life to all the hearers of the gospel, yet so as by that giving he in reality bestows nothing upon them, or conveys no real benefit to them, since it is allowed, that, notwithstanding that giving, they may yet perish eternally. Now, reader, what thinkest thou of the giving now mentioned? Is it possible that thy heart can reverence the Scriptures, and not resent such abuse of them?"

Such is the argument against the Secession doctrine; the comment is as follows:—

"Who can imagine, that a man talking at this big rate was himself abusing the Scriptures at the same time. And that this may be manifest, let us consider the Scriptures as they stand in God's book. We are

told that the people objecting against our Lord said, 'What sign showest thou then, that we may see and believe thee?' (because, in the foregoing verse, he had proposed himself to be believed on for everlasting life). 'What dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then said he unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.' And afterwards he saith, 'As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven, not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever.'

"Now, as plain as words can express it, Christ declares himself given to the world, as bread given to be eaten. And we all know that bread given to be eaten is nourishment or life to him that eateth, but no nourishment or life to him that eateth not; nevertheless, it could not be said that the manna, being given to be eaten, was in reality 'bestowing nothing upon them,' for the manna was really given to them, whether they eat it or no; nor could it be said that 'it conveyed no real benefit unto them,' for they had the benefit of a right to the manna by God's gift."\*

\* The Rev. Andrew Moir of Selkirk, the predecessor and

The preceding extracts show, with what tenacity the Seceders were wont to contend for the right of every sinner "to claim salvation on the ground of Christ's finished work." They regarded it as laying the foundation of a personal and appropriating faith,

father-in-law of the late Dr Lawson, in noticing the attack which had been made upon "the right which every perishing sinner has to appropriate the gift of God to himself in particular," makes the following proposal to Palæmon's publisher, in regard to a proper device for the embellishment of a second edition of his book :—

"I would have the engraver display all his skill in exhibiting a large, magnificent, stupendous rock. Let its basis rest on the centre of the earth, and let its summit overtop the clouds. In legible characters let this inscription be written upon it, 'The Doctrine of Free Grace;' or, in Palæmon's language, 'The Popular Doctrine.' At a little distance, let him then represent the figure of a little, proud, pragmatistical fellow, puffing and straining every muscle of his face while he attempts to blow down the rock. Let his cheeks be distended, let his eyeballs be ready to start from their sockets, and let all his countenance be fury and chagrin. At the other corner of the plate let the portrait of the same person be drawn in profile. Let his attitude be that of one grasping a goose quill with both hands, sweating and labouring hard in order to overturn the rock therewith by undermining its foundation. Over his head let a label appear just dropping from the clouds; and let it express the success of his attempt in these words, 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' This device will make a very proper frontispiece for the 'Letters upon Theron and Aspasio,' and represent, not only the tendency of that book, but the issue of all such daring attempts against the doctrine of free grace.

"I hope my serious reader" (continues Mr Moir) "will pardon this pleasantry. I could vindicate it by pleading Palæmon's practice as a precedent for it. But I rather choose to do this by the authority of a prophet, whose words he has thought fit to quote in order to justify his abuse of the truth as it is in Jesus: 'Put yourselves in array against Babylon; all ye that bend the bow shoot at her, spare no arrows.'"—*Note to a Sermon on the Exceeding Riches of the Grace of God.*

to attack which, was to attack the very vitals of the gospel. Hence says the Testimony, "If by placing us in a salvable state were meant, that the anger of God is appeased by a true and complete satisfaction to justice, so that without reference to decrees which regulate intention and determine the effect, salvation is open to all men; then, doubtless, it is true, that so far as the requisitions of law and justice are concerned, all obstructions are removed, and every one may be called as welcome, and warranted to claim salvation on the ground of Christ's finished work."

It only remains to be added, that in speaking of those "decrees which regulate intention and determine the effect," this passage does not by any means teach, that the scheme of salvation has been framed, or that the blessings of salvation are dispensed, without reference to these decrees. It simply states, that apart from these *secret* decrees, which regulate intention and determine the effect (that is the ultimate effect) salvation is open to all men, so that all may be called as welcome, and warranted to claim salvation on the ground of Christ's finished work; but it does not imply that the scheme of salvation was framed, or that the blessings of salvation are dispensed, without reference to these *secret* decrees; nor does the passage mean to assert that the atonement of Christ is to be exhibited to sinners *by itself* apart from all decrees; for it is in accordance with the divine decrees, not the secret, but the *revealed* decrees, that, "so far as the requisitions of law and justice are concerned, all obstructions are removed" out of the way of sinners returning unto God, "so that



every one may be called as welcome, and warranted to claim salvation on the ground of Christ's finished work." Now the language of the gospel is addressed to all, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

## CHAPTER V.

The supposed Auchterarder Heresy respecting the Atonement.  
—Mr Pringle's acquittal.—Deed of 1830 growing out of this case, and having reference to the Row Heresy, with which the Church of Scotland was then agitated.

SOON after the Testimony made its appearance, the Rev. William Pringle, of Auchterarder, was libelled on a charge of heresy. Assisting, in 1828, the Rev. James Forrester of Kinkell, at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper, Mr Pringle preached two sermons on the text, "It is finished." Having stated, as was alleged, in the course of his observations, that Christ died for all men, and that this was the foundation for the universal call of the gospel, Mr Forrester complained to the Presbytery of Perth. The Presbytery appointed him to embody his charge in the form of a libel. From the evidence adduced, it appeared Mr Pringle did not deny that, in connexion with the decree of election Christ died for the elect only, but that in addition to this, he maintained that Christ died for all in the sense of his atonement being sufficient for all, this universal sufficiency constituting the basis upon which the invitations of the gospel proceeded.

After hearing parties, two motions were proposed. One was, to refer the case simpliciter to the Synod;

and the other was, to give judgment in the cause. The former having carried, the matter came before the Synod of April 1830. The papers being read, Mr Forrester was heard in support of the libel, and Mr Pringle in his defence. "After a long and luminous examination of the evidence (says the *Glasgow Free Press*), Mr Pringle said, that its insufficiency entitled him to expect that the libel would be found not proven; but that, as such a verdict might not be enough to protect him from the suspicion of heresy, or to satisfy the minds of his brethren, he would do now what he had no previous opportunity of doing, namely, make a full and explicit statement of his opinions on the doctrine in question, which having done with great clearness and ability, and having intimated his perfect readiness to satisfy the scruples of any of his brethren, and to answer any reasonable question which might be asked, the court found unanimously, 'that the libel was groundless, it appearing evident that Mr Pringle had taught no doctrine inconsistent with the Standards of our church.' " \*

The Synod having acquitted Mr Pringle, appointed a Committee "to prepare an admonition as to the mode of treating the subject of the extent of the atonement," consisting of Dr Dick, Dr Ferrier, Dr Mitchell, Dr H. Belfrage, Dr Stark, and the Rev. John Brown.† The following is the admonition:—

"While the Synod reflect, with much gratitude to God, on the purity of doctrine which he hath hitherto maintained in our church, and which they regard as its stability and glory, they feel themselves called on, by the excitement produced by the cause which was decided by the Synod at the third sederunt of this meeting, and especially by the speculations prevalent in

\* Minutes of Synod.

† Now Dr Brown.

some quarters at present, respecting the extent of the atonement by the death of Christ, to bring forward the doctrine of our Standards on that subject, and to enjoin a rigid adherence to it. In these Standards it is clearly and distinctly stated, 'that as God hath appointed the elect to glory, so hath he by the eternal and most free purpose of his love, fore-ordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, and redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only. To all them for whom Christ hath purchased redemption he doth certainly apply and communicate the same, making intercession for them, and revealing to them, in and by his Word, the mysteries of salvation, effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and to obey, and governing them by his Word and Spirit.' But as, from a misconception of the phraseology of scripture, a false liberality or affectation of accuracy in language and of simplicity in their views of divine truth, as if the mysterious scheme of salvation could be disencumbered of all difficulties, many assert and maintain that Christ made atonement for all men, and thus infringe the sovereignty of divine grace, and encourage the presumption of the sinner, the Synod enjoin all ministers and preachers to be on their guard against introducing discussions in their ministrations, or employing language which may seem to oppose the doctrine of particular redemption, or that Christ in making atonement for sin was substituted in the room of the elect only, and which may unsettle the minds of the people on this point, or give occasion to members of other churches to suspect the purity of our faith. They call on them in the solemn language of Paul to Timothy, 'to show uncorruptness in doctrine, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed having no evil thing to say of them.'

"The Synod likewise enjoin Presbyteries to co-operate with our Professors of Theology in watching over the religious principles of our students, and to take heed that they be not tainted with any of the unsound and dangerous speculations of the present day.

"And whereas the gospel call, as addressed by God to sinners of mankind as such, founded on the all-sufficient virtue of the death of Christ for the salvation of guilty men without excep-

tion,—on God's gift of his Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life, and on his command to all to whom it comes to believe in the name of his Son whom he hath sent, is also clearly taught in our Standards; the Synod recommend it to ministers and preachers to use increasing earnestness in urging their hearers to repent and believe the gospel, and in pointing out the criminality as well as the danger of the unbelief that neglects the great salvation; and while they do so, that they be careful to stir up those who profess to be the redeemed of the Lord to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, by the humility of their spirits, and by the holiness of their lives."

This admonition, alluding to the loose speculations of the Row Heresy, with which the Church of Scotland was then agitated, recommends the avoidance of such language, "as may seem to oppose the doctrine of particular redemption," a recommendation in which the Marrow-men would most assuredly have joined; and it recommends likewise the avoidance of such language as may seem to oppose the doctrine, "that Christ in making atonement for sin was substituted in the room of the elect only." This also would have met their approbation for the reasons referred to in the second chapter of this History: but it would not have received their concurrence, apart from what is stated in the close of the admonition, that "it is also clearly taught in our Standards," that "the Gospel Call, as addressed by God, to sinners of mankind as such," is "founded on the all sufficient virtue of the death of Christ for the salvation of guilty men, without exception,—on God's Gift of his Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life, and on his command to all to whom it comes to believe in the name of his Son whom he hath sent."

Here the general aspect of the atonement is brought out with considerable breadth, especially when viewed in connexion with the Marrow doctrine of the Deed of Gift, to which a reference is made ; a reference which was peculiarly well-timed, the General Assembly of May 1830, having come to the conclusion, that the Rev. John M'Leod Campbell of Row should be proceeded against by the Presbytery of Dumbarton, "considering the vital importance of the subject, and that the doctrines imputed to Mr Campbell *have been condemned by the General Assembly in 1720*, and are directly opposed to the Word of God and the Standards of this Church."\*

Surely the General Assembly of 1830 might have found enough in the Word of God and the Standards of the Church to have formed the ground of their procedure in the case of Mr Campbell, who held the dogma of universal pardon, without falling back upon the deed of 1720, against which the Secession up to this day, is a practical protest. Ebenezer Erskine and the founders of the Secession fondly hoped that in future years, this Act of 1720 would be repealed, "both as being injurious to truth, and to the true honour of the Church of Scotland." This, however, has never taken place. On the contrary, it was argued in the Assembly of 1831, that "the lamentations at the passing of this Act were confined to the twelve brethren who sympathised with the errors which were condemned by it," and that this Act had "settled the peace of the Church,"† from that period to the pre-

\* Minutes of Assembly.

† Proceedings of the Assembly in the case of Mr Campbell, p. 92.

sent. We do not deem it necessary to animadvert upon such statements, nor upon the above procedure of the General Assembly, farther than to say, that it is not to the Church of Scotland we must look for a vindication of those doctrines to which the Secession is attached, and to which it has all along adhered.

In adverting, however, to the Row Heresy, in connexion with the Church of Scotland, it may not be out of place to remark that the Rev. Robert Story of Roseneath gave utterance to sentiments, much more liberal than those which fell from the greater portion of his brethren ; and that Dr Graham, who appeared for the Presbytery of Dumbarton, before the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, stated amongst other things, "that the language of the Bible, as well as of the Standards, amounts to this, that the effect of the death of Christ, is not that unbelievers are in a *pardoned* state, but in a *pardonable* one,"—a distinction by attending to which Mr Campbell might have been preserved from falling into the error of supposing that all men were actually forgiven, and that their not enjoying the benefit of this forgiveness arose simply from their not believing it.

But if Mr Campbell erred in maintaining the doctrine of universal pardon, a doctrine which was ably refuted amongst others by Drs Andrew Thomson, Hamilton, and Burns, and by Drs Wardlaw and Russell, there were those who equally erred, by taking up the position that Christ died exclusively for the elect, and that his atonement bore no aspect of love to mankind at large. It was this exclusive theory, indeed, that drove Mr Campbell to the opposite extreme.

## CHAPTER VI.

Revival Excitement leading to certain Views of the Atonement being pushed too far—Cases of the Rev. Messrs Morison, junior, Walker, Morison, senior, Rutherford, and Guthrie.

THE excitement connected with the Row Heresy was soon lost in the agitation of the Voluntary Controversy, which again was succeeded by the question of Revivals. The intelligence on this subject received from America, together with the accounts of revivals in our own land, particularly at Kilsyth, served to rouse the public mind, and awaken the churches to a sense of deeper obligation than was previously felt, to prosecute with zeal the great ends of their existence. The United Secession Church welcomed the prospect that presented itself of more energetic spiritual exertion. From the proceedings of the Synod in 1840, it appears that written reports on the subject of revivals were given in from the Presbyteries of Orkney, Annan, and Carlyle, Selkirk, Forfar, Stirling and Falkirk, and Glasgow, expressing generally much gratitude to God that the subject had been brought under the notice of the Church, and stating that considerable attention had been paid to it, and that many excellent results had been attained. It is not wonderful that a movement of this nature



should have enlisted the energies especially of the younger portion of the ministry, and that with youthful zeal there should have mingled much that required the gentle curbing of riper years and more matured experience. Mr James Morison, preacher, afterwards settled at Kilmarnock, distinguished himself above many in connexion with it, but soon gave reason to fear that, in dwelling on that aspect of the death of Christ which it bears to a world lying in wickedness, he had pushed his views of this aspect to an extreme. The result was, that, soon after his ordination, the Presbytery of Kilmarnock felt themselves under the necessity of taking steps which issued in Mr Morison's suspension, against which he protested, and appealed to the Synod that met at Glasgow in 1841.

The charges against Mr Morison were ranged under the two heads—of erroneous doctrine, and of disingenuous conduct. Under the first head, the charges were, *first*, that he taught that the object of saving faith to any person was the statement that Christ made atonement for the sins of that person, as he made atonement for the sins of the whole world, and that the seeing this statement to be true was in itself saving faith; *second*, that all men were able of themselves to believe the gospel unto salvation, or, in other words, to put away unbelief, the only obstacle to salvation which the atonement has not removed; *third*, that no person ought to be directed to pray for grace to help him to believe, even though he be an “anxious sinner,” and that no person's prayers could be of any avail till he believed unto salvation; *fourth*, that repentance in Scripture meant only a change of

mind, but not godly sorrow for sin; *fifth*, that justification is not pardon, but that it is implied in pardon—that God pardons only in his character of Father, and justifies only in his character of Judge—that justification is not the expression of the fatherly favour of God; *sixth*, that election comes in the order of nature after the purpose of atonement; *seventh*, that there were in Mr Morison's publications many expressions unscriptural, unwarrantable, and calculated to depreciate the atonement—for example, that it is a “*talismanic something*,” that “*Jesus could not so suffer the consequences of sin as to liberate us from deserving punishment*,” and “*that the atonement of Christ has not secured the removal of the obstacles to salvation that are within sinners elected to eternal life*,” the *eighth charge* referred to the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin to his posterity, and Mr Morison was charged with teaching that men could not be deserving of the punishment of eternal death on account of Adam's first sin. Under the second head, he was charged with disingenuous conduct, *first*, in having prevented the sale of his pamphlet on the question, *What shall I do to be saved?* till after his ordination; and *second*, in that he had acted inconsistently with a pledge he had given the Presbytery to suppress the pamphlet, not endeavouring to prevent the republication of it in Kilmarnock; and that he had, on the day of his ordination, given the Presbytery to believe that his views were in accordance with the Secession Standards, though he afterwards taught and preached, in the estimation of the Presbytery, in direct opposition to these Standards.

From the above it will be seen, that Mr Morison's views on the atonement, were not the only ground upon which he was found fault with ; but still the question respecting the atonement was the great matter in dispute. As brought before the Synod, this question was presented in a somewhat complex form, rendering it doubtful, whether the accusation against him was,—that he held the doctrine of a universal atonement, or that the doctrine of a universal atonement was the object of saving faith. Without inquiring particularly as to the precise form in which the charge of heresy was laid, suffice it to observe, that the theory not originated, but adopted, by him was this, that Christ in making atonement sustained no special relationship to any portion of mankind, but stood in the same common relationship to every sinner of our race, his atonement doing for all, whatever it did for any,—it being intended to do nothing more than to open the door of mercy, and to render it consistent with the righteous character of God to extend forgiveness to the guilty. He admitted, indeed, the doctrine of election, in virtue of which the salvation of a definite number was secured, but as he conceived the purpose of atonement to be prior in the order of nature to the decree of election, the decree of election not having respect to the provision of the atonement, but solely to its application, Mr Morison contended, that the atonement itself was to be viewed, not as having been made with special intentions towards some, but as having been made with the same gracious intentions towards all.

Parties being heard at great length, and the

members of Synod having delivered their sentiments,—"the Synod, without sanctioning every thing in the papers and pleadings, approved of the diligence and fidelity of the Presbytery of Kilmarnock—dismissed the appeal on account of the erroneous and inconsistent opinions set forth by Mr Morison, and his blameable conduct in regard to the suppression of his tract—continued his suspension—and appointed a Committee to deal with Mr Morison, and to report to the Synod."\*

The Committee being appointed, Mr Morison met with them, but on perceiving that nothing would satisfy them short of a distinct acknowledgment of the special reference of the atonement, he declined meeting with them again; and having disregarded the sentence of suspension imposed by the Presbytery, and continued by the Synod, he was declared to be no longer in connexion with the Secession Church.

Dr Brown having previously dissented from the Synod's finding in this case, those appointed to answer his reasons of dissent, requested the Synod to meet as a Committee of the whole house to hear their report. The Synod having agreed to this, they were advised to converse with Dr Brown upon the subject. This having been done, it was reported that Dr Brown had made a statement, after hearing which, they were unanimously of opinion that it was unnecessary to proceed further, or to insert the reasons in the minutes. Dr Brown's statement was to the following effect:—That while he had felt it necessary for his own exoneration, to mark his dis-

\* Minutes of Synod.

sent, and assign his reasons for it, he had no wish to insist on these reasons being put on the minutes, but left them in the hands of the Synod, to be disposed of as they pleased: that while he objected to the sentence of Synod, on account of what he deemed its vagueness, in not specifying the errors condemned, he strongly disapproved of many things in the statements and conduct of Mr James Morison, and would have accounted it sinful for the Synod, in present circumstances, to have sent him back to Kilmarnock in the exercise of his ministry; and that, in the present state of public excitement, it was his strong conviction that all entrusted with the education of young men for the ministry of the gospel, should carefully guard them against extreme views and doubtful expressions, and that no exhortation from them to the students\* was more needed, or ought to be more frequently and earnestly urged, than "young men be

\* "In the examination of religious doctrines, all men, and especially young men, ought to be very cautious. What seems a discovery of a new truth, may be merely a new, and not a better, mode of expressing an old one; or, worse than this, may be the revival of an old error under a new phase; and even should it be otherwise, no alteration in our views of religious truth once formed, on what we think satisfactory grounds, should be admitted till examined in all its relations, and not only found to be apparently consistent, and even apparently required by some passages of Scripture, but, while required by some, to be consistent with all. And, as to new modes of expression, while it is of the highest importance that the christian teacher should be able to vary his modes of expressing divine truths, as otherwise he is not very likely to make them generally understood, and doubts may be fairly entertained whether he himself very clearly understands them, all startling paradoxical phraseology, every thing that does not fairly come under the description of 'sound speech that cannot be condemned,'—*ἡ φωνὴ τῆ ὑγιαινούσης διδασκαλίας*,—'the things which become sound doctrine,' is

sober minded." The Synod heard this statement with cordial satisfaction, agreed to insert it in their minutes, approved of the conduct of the Committee, and adopted their recommendation.\*

At the same Synod, the Rev. Robert Walker of Comrie, now of Dunfermline, appeared, charged by the Presbytery of Perth with holding views, on the subject of the atonement, similar to those of Mr Morison. In the course of his defence, however, it was manifest, that he was not prepared to deny the special reference of the atonement, or to call in question the doctrine, that Christ, in making atonement, sustained special relations to his people, in virtue of which their salvation was secured. He, indeed, conceived that the proper place for election lay in the application of the atonement; so that, in arranging the ends contemplated by the atonement, he would prefer to put the general reference before the special, and to say the atonement has a general reference, opening the door of mercy to all, and a special reference, securing the salvation of the elect, —rather than to reverse the propositions, and say, the atonement has a special reference, securing the salvation of the elect, and a general reference, opening the door of mercy to all. This was the mode of stating the truth upon this subject which he preferred; but, in adhering to this arrangement, Mr Walker

carefully to be avoided; and we have great reason to suspect that we are out of the way when we find ourselves frequently obliged to explain and qualify our expressions in order to prevent their being misinterpreted, or understood in a sense different from that in which we employ them."—*Hints to Students of Divinity, &c. by John Brown, D.D.*

\* Minutes of Synod.

did not so separate these two references, as to maintain that they were not both present to the mind of God in providing the atonement, and to the mind of Christ in making it. Accordingly, the committee which met in his case gave in the following report:—

“ The committee, after long deliberation, find, 1st, That in respect of the divine decree, Mr Walker holds, that the glory of God is the great end of the whole scheme of salvation; that, in subordination to this end, he graciously purposed to open a door of mercy to mankind-sinners, and to secure infallibly the salvation of a definite number; and that, to accomplish these ends, the mediation of his Son was appointed.

“ 2d, That Mr Walker holds, that the death of Christ bears such a relation to all men, that all men are now free and welcome to come to God through him; while, at the same time, it has a special relation to his own people who have been given to him by the Father, as a seed to be saved by him through his sacrificial sufferings and availing intercession, and whom he will infallibly bring to everlasting glory.”

This report was unanimously and cordially received by the Synod, and was recorded as a comfortable termination of the cause.

In consequence of these discussions, the Synod deemed it proper to appoint a committee to draw up a Statement of Principles, to be circulated throughout the church. In turning to this document, which received the general approval of the Synod when it again assembled in 1842, we find that it is the special reference of the atonement upon which it insists, as being that which was endangered by the tenets Mr Morison had espoused.

“ By the party accused,” it says, “ it was held, that our Lord in dying bore no special relation to the elect, but was alike the substitute of the whole human race; that his atonement was made equally, and in every sense, for all men; that it secured no saving blessings to any, but solely removed all obstructions

arising from the character and law of God to the salvation of mankind, thus rendering salvation possible to all men, without certainly securing it to any; and removing all obstructions to the salvation of all men, except those which exist in their own hearts, which, as will afterwards appear, it was held, all men are able to remove of themselves. Its relation to the Divine purpose was affirmed to be the following:—While it was admitted that the purpose of God is one and eternal, it was held, that the order in which we are to conceive of its arrangement is to this effect: That God first appointed the atonement, as has been said, not to secure the salvation of any, but to render the salvation of all possible; but that, foreseeing that all men, if left to their own depravity, would reject this provision of mercy, he chose a definite number, to whom, through the medium of the atonement, he would impart his Holy Spirit, and all the blessings of salvation; thus placing election posterior to the purpose of the atonement, and thereby disconnecting, in the purpose of God, the atonement of his Son with the certain salvation of those who were given him.”

While thus vindicating the special relations, the Statement of Principles gives, at the same time, the sentiments of the church upon the general aspects of the atonement:—

“While these special relations,” it says, “of the atonement to the elect, as fixed in God’s everlasting counsels, and revealed to faith in the gospel, must be held as an important part of the truth of God, it must also be held, and it has uniformly been the doctrine of the Secession church, *that the atonement of Christ has general relations to the world.* As will be stated more fully in the next section, the atonement, and the blessings of salvation connected with it, are presented in the gospel as God’s freely offered gifts to all men. This exhibition assumes, that these provisions of the love of God are needed by all men, and are suited to the necessities of all men, as guilty and miserable sinners. It also assumes that there is an intrinsic sufficiency in the atonement of Christ for the salvation of all men; and that it so removes all legal obstructions to their salvation, as that the door of mercy is open to them, and that, in consistency with his holy character, law, and government, God presents to them all salvation as a gift to be accepted by faith. Of the sufficiency and perfection of the atonement we cannot form too



exalted conceptions. It is the sacrifice of the Son of God, and must possess an infinite sufficiency and value; so that, while if the number of those eventually to be saved by it had been indefinitely smaller than it is, this provision for the honour of God in saving them would have been necessary, it would, as far as man can judge, have sufficed, had their number been indefinitely greater. The infinite hatred of the Holy One to sin, the honour of his law and justice in condemning it, and the sanctity of his moral administration, demanded such a sacrifice, in order that any of our race should be saved; and the honour of God, in all these views, is thus provided for, in presenting salvation as a gift to all men, and bestowing it on all who believe in Jesus. 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus,' Rom. iii. 25, 26. 'But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,' Heb. ix. 26. As whatever God does he purposed to do, working all things according to the counsel of his own will, this general reference of the atonement must have had a place in the everlasting purpose of God, as well as its special relation to the elect.

"On this last, or general view of the atonement, the doctrine of the Secession church may be found in the two following extracts, the first occurring in the 'Act of the Associate Synod concerning Arminian Errors,' 1754:—'The Lord Jesus Christ, in the glorious constitution of his person as God-man, *Emmanuel*, *God with us*, doth stand in an equal or undistinguished relation of a kinsman-Redeemer to mankind-sinners, *as such*: his mediatory offices, in the true and glorious nature thereof, do stand in an equal or undistinguished relation and suitableness to the case and need of mankind-sinners, *as such*: the atonement and righteousness of Christ are of themselves of a justice-satisfying and law-magnifying nature, containing the utmost of what law and justice can require for repairing the whole breach of the covenant of works, and fulfilling the same, in order to the justification of mankind-sinners *as such*, who are warranted to betake themselves thereto by faith.' The other extract is from the Testimony of the United Associate Synod, 1827, chap. 2d, sec. 7th, 'Concerning the Extent of Salvation.'—'If by placing us in a salvable state, were meant, that the anger of God is ap-

peased by a true and complete satisfaction to justice, so that, without reference to decrees which regulate intention and determine the effect, salvation is open to all men, then doubtless it is true, that, so far as *the requisitions of law and justice* are concerned, all obstructions are removed, and every one may be called as welcome and warranted to claim salvation on the ground of Christ's finished work.' John vi. 49-51; Rev. xxii. 17."

From these quotations it will at once be perceived, that the Synod, while holding the general relations of the atonement, was at the same time zealous for the special aspects in which it is presented to us in Scripture, and which were threatened with subversion by the doctrines taught by Mr Morison. Accordingly, when the same doctrines were again brought before the Synod in May 1842, in the case of the Rev. Robert Morison of Bathgate, who had dissented from the decision which was given in the case of his son, the questions put to Mr Morison senior, were of that kind which showed the determination of the Synod to preserve the special relationships from being set aside. For example, the following were proposed to him:—

"Had Christ in dying no other relation to the elect than to the non-elect?"

"Does Mr Morison hold that the atonement of Christ procures no saving blessings, but merely removes obstacles to the salvation of all men?"

"Did Christ Jesus in dying love all men equally?"\*

These are a specimen of the questions which were put; while the committee who examined him state in their report, that they found—

"I. That on the subject of the atonement, he holds that the death of Christ had no special reference to those that shall be

saved; that his death was not an effect of special love to his people; that, in designing to die for them, he had no special love to them; that in the act of dying for them, he had no special love to them; and that the special love of Christ operates and takes effect only in the application of the benefits of redemption. Farther, that the death of Christ, while it removes obstructions to salvation out of the way of all men, secures salvation to none. Queries 1, 2, 5, 6. Opposed to Scripture. John x. 11, 'The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.' Acts xx. 28, 'The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' Heb. ix. 12, 'By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' Eph. v. 25, &c., 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word, and that he might present it to himself a glorious church.' Opposed to the Confession, chap. viii. sec. 1.—'It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the mediator between God and man, the prophet, priest, and king, the Head and Saviour of his church, the heir of all things, and the judge of the world, even to whom he did, from all eternity, give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.' Confession, chap. viii. sec. 5, 'The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those the Father hath given to him.'

Having received this report, the Synod suspended him, and appointed a committee to deal with him upon these and other matters preferred against him; the result of the whole being a repetition of what took place in the case of his son.

The two Morisons having been thus disjoined from the Secession, the Synod agreed to issue another statement, entitled "Doctrinal Errors Condemned by the United Associate Synod," which was enjoined to be read from every pulpit in the church. We give the following extracts.

"The Synod condemn the assertion—that Christ in dying had no special love to his people.

"The Synod condemn the assertion—that, though the atonement of Christ has a general reference, and opens the door of mercy to all, yet it secures the salvation of none.

"The Synod condemn the assertion—that all the ends to be effected by the atonement were not necessarily and simultaneously present to the Divine mind in the appointment of the Redeemer to die for sinners, and that all these ends were not present to the mind of the Son in making the atonement, nor infallibly secured by it."

Against the second of these propositions, however, the Rev. A. C. Rutherford of Falkirk entered his dissent. In his opinion it was not an error to declare that the atonement of Christ secures salvation to none. His case was sent down to his Presbytery, and came up again to the Synod in May 1843; the Presbytery having found that Mr Rutherford still adhered to the error—that the atonement of Christ secured salvation to none. In explanation, Mr Rutherford contended that the atonement did not *of itself* secure salvation to any; but that he had no objections to say, that, viewed in connexion with the sovereign purpose of application, it secured salvation to the elect. But this did not suffice to satisfy the Synod, inasmuch as he maintained that the atonement, as such, did nothing more, and was intended to do nothing more, than simply open the door of mercy, leaving the salvation of Christ's people to be secured by the sovereign purpose of God; yet not by the sovereign purpose of God bearing upon the *provision* of the atonement, but bearing only upon its *application*: this application not being conceived to have been determined on until the atonement itself was contemplated as already made. The suspension

of Mr Rutherford by the Presbytery was confirmed by the Synod, but on his protesting and declining its authority, he ceased to be a minister of the Secession.

The Rev. John Guthrie of Kendal having dissented from the decision affirming Mr Rutherford's suspension, his case was also taken up by the Synod at this time, and disposed of in a similar manner. His reasons of dissent were the following:—

“1st, Because the alleged error, on the ground of which Mr Rutherford was suspended by this Synod, *is not an error*; for if the atonement, *as an atonement*, secures the salvation of one, it must, as an atonement for all, secure the salvation of *all*. But it does not secure the salvation of all, there being many for whom it was made who finally perish. Therefore the atonement, as an atonement, cannot strictly be said to secure salvation to any.

“2d, Because Mr Rutherford distinctly admitted, in his Reasons of Dissent given in at last meeting of Synod, and subsequently in his statement of doctrine laid upon the table of his Presbytery, and further in his pleadings at the bar of Synod, at its present meeting, that, *viewed in connexion with the divine purpose of application*, the atonement *does* secure the salvation of all who shall ultimately be saved.”

In answer to these reasons, the Committee appointed to deal with him gave in a report, from which we make the following extracts:—

“The Committee find that Mr Guthrie, in his first Reason of Dissent, maintains that what the Synod has declared, in the case of Mr Rutherford, to be an error, is not an error: and has thus placed himself in direct opposition to the deliberate and solemn finding of this Court.

“The Committee find that Mr Guthrie, in his second Reason of Dissent, admits that, ‘viewed in connexion with the divine purpose of application, the atonement does secure the salvation of all who shall ultimately be saved;’ but the Committee, while looking upon this as a highly important admission, do not regard it as bringing the views of the Dissident, on the subject of atonement, into unison with the Standards of our church.

"The Committee submit that the doctrine of the United Secession Church is, that the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ secures the salvation of a definite number, as certainly as it opens the door of mercy to all, and consequently, that it is as much an error to affirm that it does not secure the salvation of any, as it would be to affirm that it does not open the door of mercy to all—and the Committee farther submit that the error involved in the statement 'that the atonement viewed in connexion with the divine purpose of application does secure the salvation of all who shall ultimately be saved,' lies in this, that it represents the atonement as nothing more than a ground or channel on or through which God purposed to bestow, and therefore will certainly bestow in the case of many, the blessings of salvation. The statement involves no recognition of the atonement as being made by the Son, on the faith of a promise on the part of the Father, to give him a numerous spiritual seed, in consequence of which the atonement of the Son when made, and not merely the purpose of the Father to apply it, secured infallibly the salvation of all who shall ultimately be brought to glory.

"The Committee submit that the doctrine of our Church on this point is, that the salvation of a fixed number entered into the purposes or designs of God in the appointment of a Redeemer—and farther, that the atonement made by the Redeemer being the fulfilment of covenant engagements between him and the Father, has infallibly secured, or rendered infallibly certain, the justification, sanctification, and glorification of the spiritual seed he was to see on his making his soul a propitiatory sacrifice."

The reader, after perusing the above, will be prepared to learn that, along with the others we have mentioned, Mr Guthrie was cut off from the Secession.

Thus Mr Morison of Kilmarnock, Mr Morison of Bathgate, Mr Rutherford of Falkirk, and Mr Guthrie of Kendal, were condemned by the Synod for holding views subversive of the special reference of the atonement.

After their withdrawal, an overture from the Presbytery of Glasgow was adopted by the Synod,

recommending, amongst other things, the various Presbyteries to meet for prayer and conference, with the view of taking prudent measures in relation to the agitated state of the church. The consequences to which this overture led will be given in the subsequent chapter.

## CHAPTER VII.

Surmises on the part of some, with regard to the Orthodoxy of the Professors, Drs Balmer and Brown.—Conference of the Synod, and happy and harmonious finding of October 1843.—Review of this finding in May 1844.—Left undisturbed.—Complaint of the Professors regarding an Appendix to a Treatise on the Atonement by Dr Marshall.—Happy issue of this matter.

AN overture, as has been remarked, from the Presbytery of Glasgow, was adopted, recommending, amongst other things, the various Presbyteries to meet for prayer and conference, with the view of taking such measures as might be deemed proper, in relation to the controversy. As the result of this, two overtures were presented at the next meeting of Synod in October 1843 by the Presbytery of Paisley and Greenock.

One was—

“That the Synod examine an Essay by Polhill, on the extent of the death of Christ, lately re-published, with a recommendatory Preface by Dr Balmer, and declare whether the sentiments contained in the said Essay and Preface are in accordance with the doctrine of the Word of God, as exhibited in the Standards of this Church.”



And the other was—

“ That the Synod hold a Committee of the whole house, for conference on the divisions in sentiment on doctrinal points agitated in our Churches; and request the two senior Professors to express to the Synod their sentiments on these points.”

The Synod, taking up the second of these overtures first, as being the more comprehensive, resolved itself into a Committee of the whole house.

Professor Balmer, as being the person principally involved, spoke first, and amongst the many things which he advanced, the following may be regarded as the chief:—

Holding what he conceived to be the doctrine of the Secession Church respecting the atonement, the main subject of dispute, he adverted, first, to its special, and then to its general references. As to its special reference, viewed as a work for the elect, he considered that a definite portion of our race had been fixed upon for its objects, that this choice was wholly of grace, and that, in undertaking the office of Redeemer, Christ entered into covenant engagements with the Father in their behalf. They were his promised seed, of whom he was appointed the head and representative. He held, further, that in the appointing and in the making of the atonement, the elect were regarded with peculiar, though not exclusive, love. The death of Christ, in this aspect, he looked upon as securing the salvation of the elect.

With regard to the order of the divine decrees, while not presuming to dogmatize on a matter so very abstruse, he considered that, as the end is prior to the means, and as the atonement, in its special re-

ference, was a mean to the salvation of the elect, so the latter must be considered as uppermost in the divine estimation, the salvation of the elect being that, but for which, Christ, we must suppose, would never have assumed the human nature, nor died upon the cross. All these things he firmly and distinctly held.

As to the general reference of the atonement, or its aspect towards the world, he put the question, Was it intended exclusively for the elect, and not fraught with love to others? or did Christ not die, in some sense, for all? And in answering this he was equally plain and emphatic. To the non-elect, he considered the atonement had opened the door of mercy as truly as it had secured the salvation of the elect, removing all legal obstacles out of the way of their salvation, and thus bringing eternal life within their reach; in the doing of which Christ had evinced a greater love for them than either creation or providence could afford—a love, the greatness of which was fitted to excite their wonder and to melt their hearts.

In regard to the supposed difficulties connected with the double aspects of the atonement, he contended that, although he might be unable to remove them, he would still hold the general and the special references, seeing they were both plainly revealed in Scripture.

In further commenting on the general reference, he inquired whether we might speak of it as an atonement? After remarking that it was characterised as a satisfaction in the Testimony, which is, in fact, the leading idea in atonement, he proceeded

to observe that, in the English language, the term atonement is used to denote that which enables us to dispense with debt or punishment, and that it is employed in two senses, sometimes as simply satisfaction which enables us to remit, and, at other times, as involving provision for the communication of the blessing. Can it, then, he inquired, ever be used in the first sense? It is to be found so used, he affirmed, in such writers as M'Gee, Scott, and others, as well as in the Testimony, while nothing is more common than for the people to make use of it in this sense, when in their prayers they speak of God being unable, without a satisfaction, to pardon their offences. He considered, therefore, that there was a proper, unobjectionable, and not unfrequently used sense, in which the death of Christ, in its general aspect, might be spoken of as a universal satisfaction or atonement—a sense which embodied a great scriptural truth, without which we would have no gospel to preach. But as the term atonement was liable to be misunderstood, by being associated in many minds with saving results, he did not feel himself at liberty to employ it in connexion with the general reference, either in the pulpit or in the chair; or if he ever did employ it on any occasion, it must have been with such explanations as those which he was giving; and as to its being employed in the Preface to Polhill, it was in fact so guarded and explained.

After Dr Balmer had concluded, Dr Brown rose to give his sentiments. Premising his concurrence in what had been advanced by his professorial colleague, and referring to the published statement of

his opinions,\* he proceeded to remark :—That he was equally persuaded, that, by divine appointment, the death of Jesus Christ removes the legal bars in the way of the salvation, and opens the door of mercy to all mankind, making it consistent with the perfections of the divine character, and the principles of the divine government, to make a free offer of salvation to every human being, through the faith of the truth, and that, by the divine appointment, the death of Jesus Christ secures the actual salvation of those whom God, in sovereign mercy, from all eternity, elected to everlasting life—that the order in which these two, equally true propositions should stand, seemed to him in a great measure, a matter of indifference—that he did not interfere with the Christian liberty of his brethren, in forming or expressing their sentiments as to the ordering the divine decrees respecting the atonement and its objects, so long as they did not throw doubt on one or other of these propositions, both of which seemed to him clearly stated in the Scriptures, and also in our subordinate Standards, but that he felt that “such knowledge was too wonderful for him, it was high, he could not attain to it:”—that the proposition “Christ died for men,” had been held in three senses. In the sense of the Universalist, that Christ died so as to secure salvation, he held that he died only for the elect. In the sense of the Arminian, that Christ died to purchase easier terms of salvation, and common grace to enable men to comply with these terms, he held that he died for no man. In the sense of the great body

\* Opinions on Faith, &c.

of Calvinists, that Christ died to remove legal obstacles in the way of human salvation, by making a perfect satisfaction for sin, he held that he died for all men—and whether in thus dying for all men, he expiated the sins of all men, or made atonement for all, depends on the sense you give to the terms expiation and atonement. In one sense he did not—in another sense he did. That he firmly held the great doctrines respecting the purposes of grace, and the plan of salvation, usually taught under the head “of the covenant of grace.” That he believed Jesus Christ stood in peculiar relations to the elect when he suffered and died, as their representative and substitute, though at the same time, as suffering those evils which were the expression of the divine judicial displeasure against the sins of mankind, by suffering which the door of mercy has been set open to all, he might so far be viewed as the substitute of the race—the just one standing in the place of the unjust.

Such is an outline of the substance of Dr Brown’s statements, which followed those of Dr Balmer. Upon this, a long and faithful conversation ensued, terminating in the appointment of a small committee to draw up and submit a report, which they did in these terms :—

“ The Committee having spent various sittings in full, free, and brotherly conference on matters brought before them by the overture, particularly on the subject of the atonement, were delighted to find that, on explanations, supposed diversities of sentiment in a great measure disappeared, and that scriptural harmony prevailed among the brethren :

That, in particular, on the two aspects of the atonement there was entire harmony, viz. that in making the atonement, the Saviour bore special covenant relations to the elect, had a special love to them, and infallibly secured their everlasting salvation; and that his obedience unto the death afforded such a satisfaction to the justice of God as that on the ground of it, in consistency with his character and law, the door of mercy is opened to mankind indiscriminately, and a full and free salvation is presented for their acceptance. The Committee find that the misunderstanding has mainly arisen from the use of ambiguous terms, such as 'universal atonement,' and other equivocal expressions; and they consider it incumbent on ministers and preachers to avoid the use of such expressions, to avail themselves of scriptural and well understood language, and to study the things that make for peace, and whereby they may promote the edification of the body of Christ."

This report having been submitted, several suggestions were thrown out with the view of making it meet with a unanimous concurrence. It was proposed, that instead of "the door of mercy is opened to mankind *indiscriminately*," it should be "*to all men*," which was agreed to. But the most important amendment, which gave rise to the longest discussion, was one proposed by the Rev. John Law of Dunfermline, and ultimately agreed to, that the latter part of the finding should stand thus:—

"The Committee being of opinion, that the misunderstanding has mainly arisen from the use of ambiguous language, such as 'universal atonement,' and 'limited atonement;' recommend that ministers

and preachers abstain from such phraseology, and from all expressions that may seem opposed either to the special relations of the atonement on the one hand, or its general relations on the other."

The other overture from the Presbytery of Paisley and Greenock, was now brought forward.

"That the Synod examine an Essay by Polhill, on the extent of the death of Christ, lately republished, with a recommendatory Preface by Dr Balmer, and declare whether the sentiments contained in the said Essay and Preface are in accordance with the doctrine of the Word of God, as exhibited in the Standards of this Church."

The Rev. Robert Wilson was heard at great length in its support. Dr Balmer having explained himself fully on the previous overture, did not deem it necessary to occupy, a second time, the attention of the Court. In the course of his observations formerly, he had stated the circumstances which led him to write the Preface to Polhill's Essay,—an Essay which, along with Dr Owen,\* he did not

\* "The modesty," (says Dr Owen), "wherewith he (Polhill), dissents from others, or opposes their sentiments, without severe reflections on persons or opinions, is also another thing which deserves both commendation and imitation: and the consideration thereof gives me the confidence in these few lines designed unto another end, to express my own dissent from some of his apprehensions, especially about the object and extent of redemption. Had I seen this discourse before it was wholly printed, I should have communicated to the author my thoughts upon that subject, and upon some few other passages in it; but where there is an agreement in the substance and design of any doctrine, as there is between my judgment, and what is here solidly declared, it is our duty to bear with each other in things circumstantial, or different explanations of the same truth, when there is no incursion made upon the main principles we own."

consider to be faultless, but which presented, in his estimation, the doctrine of the twofold aspect of the atonement in a scriptural light,—the first part of the Essay being occupied in proving that “Christ died for all men;” the second, in proving that “he did not die for all equally; that, while his death secures infallibly the salvation of the elect, it merely places the rest of mankind in what is called a salvable state,—a state in which they may be saved on gospel terms.”\*

Three motions were made.

The *first* was, “That this overture be not adopted, the propriety of doing so being superseded by the Conference held last week, and the deliverance then come to.”

The *second* was, “That considering that the main subject of this overture has, at previous sederunts, been very fully discussed, and the mind of the Synod expressed in regard to it; considering that Dr Balmer explicitly states in his Preface, that the Essay of Polhill is ‘not free from faults and imperfections—that some of its expressions and statements are certainly unguarded, and some of its reasonings inconclusive;’ and considering farther, the explanations already given by Dr Balmer, in regard to the Preface, the Synod agree to declare, that it was not necessary to entertain the overture.”

The *third* was, “That the Synod adopt the overture.”

The vote being taken, the second motion was preferred. Against this finding, Mr Wilson entered

\* Preface, page 5.



his dissent, in his own name and that of all who might adhere to him.

Thus terminated the Synodical inquiries of 1843, respecting the orthodoxy of the professors. Their statements, which were afterwards given to the world, abundantly showed that they were no subverters of the special reference of the atonement, as some had imagined, and no abettors of a different arrangement of the divine decrees from that which was generally acknowledged ; and hence the delight expressed in the finding that was come to at the scriptural harmony of sentiment which was discovered to prevail " on the two aspects of the atonement, namely, that in making the atonement, the Saviour bore special covenant relations to the elect, had a special love to them, and infallibly secured their everlasting salvation ; and that his obedience unto the death afforded such a satisfaction to the justice of God, as that, on the ground of it, in consistency with his character and law, the door of mercy is opened to all men, and a free and full salvation is presented for their acceptance."

This finding, however, with its accompanying recommendation, was destined to undergo another discussion at the subsequent meeting of Synod in May 1844. The Rev. Alexander Balfour, of Lethendy, a member of the Presbytery of Perth, who had not been present, by reason of old age, at the Synod when the overtures from the Presbytery of Paisley and Greenock were discussed, requested, amongst other things, that the decision should be reviewed. After a long debate, and after several motions had been made to dispose of Mr Balfour's petition, a

committee was appointed to prepare, if possible, a resolution in which all might unite. The committee consisted of the Rev. Dr Heugh, Dr King, William Marshall, Coupar-Angus, Dr Marshall, Joseph Brown, David Smith, Dr Baird, John Smart, Dr Beattie, Dr Hay, William Johnstone, and Andrew Sommer-ville,—Dr Heugh, convener.

Having met and considered the matter, the committee presented the following proposal to the Court :—

“ I. That the Synod allow the petitioner to accede to the dissent of Mr Wilson and his adherents.

“ II. That the Synod adhere to the doctrine asserted in the deliverance of the ninth sederunt of its last meeting, viz. ‘ That in making the atonement, the Saviour bore special covenant relations to the elect, had a special love to them, and infallibly secured their everlasting salvation ; and that his obedience unto the death afforded such a satisfaction to the justice of God, as that on the ground of it, in consistency with his character and law, the door of mercy is opened to all men, and a free and full salvation is presented for their acceptance.’

“ III. That the Synod think it necessary to declare, that on the atonement, the main subject involved in the Petition and Remonstrance before the Court, the doctrine of this Church is :—

“ Confession, chap. iii. sec. 6,—As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected being fallen in Adam are redeemed by Christ—are effectually called unto faith in Christ

by his Spirit working in due season—are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.’ Chap. viii. sec. 8,—‘ To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same—making intercession for them—and revealing unto them, in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation—effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey—and governing their hearts by his word and Spirit—overcoming all their enemies by his Almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.’

“ As illustrated in the Testimony, chap. ii. sec. 7:—‘ It is a deviation from the truth to hold, that, although all men shall not be saved, yet Christ, according to the purpose of God and his own intention, died for all men, actually expiating the guilt even of those who eventually perish.’—‘ The third, and apparently the least erroneous form of holding the doctrine of universal redemption, but still not accurate in its terms, and, as usually explained, inconsistent with Scripture, is, That Christ, by his death, placed all men in a salvable state. \* \* \* If, by placing us in a salvable state, were meant that the anger of God is appeased by a true and complete satisfaction to justice, so that without reference to decrees which regulate intention and determine the effect, salvation is open to all men, then, doubtless, it is true that so far as the requisitions of law and

justice are concerned, all obstructions are removed, and every one may be called as welcome, and warranted to claim salvation on the ground of Christ's finished work."

This proposal embodies the finding of October 1843, so far as the doctrine of that finding is concerned, but omits the recommendation which was annexed to it, and substitutes two quotations, as exhibiting the doctrine of the Secession, both on the special and general aspects of the atonement; the one quotation on the special aspect, being from the Confession of Faith; and the other on the general aspect, being a passage from the Testimony.

Perceiving, however, no reason for entertaining the proposal, or for disturbing in any way its former decision, the Synod contented itself with allowing Mr Balfour to enter his dissent from the decision of October 1843; but, inasmuch as there was ground to fear "that the meaning of the decision had been misapprehended, the Synod thought proper to declare, that it was not intended as an alteration of the Standards of our Church, but rather as a declaration of the existence of harmony in regard to the system of divine truth, which these Standards contain."\*

This matter being disposed of, the professors themselves now lodged a complaint in consequence of certain imputations against them, contained in an appendix to a publication by Dr Marshall, entitled "The Catholic Doctrine of Redemption Vindicated." In that appendix, Dr Marshall, in commenting upon the published statements of the professors, made, amongst others, the following remarks:—

\* Minutes of Synod.

"At page 46,\* Dr Balmer adverts to a charge which, he says, is 'inseparable from that of heresy—the charge of dishonesty, which has been broadly insinuated against not a few, both of our elders and our younger ministers.' With regard to this, I would take leave to remark, that Dr Balmer has little cause to be surprised, much less has he any right to be indignant, if such a charge should be insinuated—nay, more than insinuated, if it should be directly preferred, and in no mitigated tone. If 'our elders and our younger ministers,' who have imbibed the new views, should refuse to abandon these views, and if they should be encouraged in the refusal by our two senior professors, there may be a demand made on

\* The following is the portion of Dr Balmer's Statement to which Dr Marshall refers :—

"It will naturally be expected that I should here advert to another charge inseparable from that of heresy, the charge of dishonesty, which has been broadly insinuated against not a few both of our elders and our younger ministers. Of this charge, I shall say little more than that, being a very grave one, it ought not to be lightly preferred; that my firm conviction is, that it cannot be substantiated; and that the past history of the Secession supplies admonitions numerous and impressive to deter from such accusations. Without appealing to more recent occurrences, it will doubtless occur to many, that two brighter names than those of Lawson and Dick, have rarely adorned that section of our church to which I belonged previous to the Union; that names less respectable than those of their opponents in the Old Light controversy, have seldom disgraced it; and that if we look back forty years, we find that the charge of dishonesty was one of the principal accusations hurled unsparingly by the latter against the former. Far am I from intending to elevate the persons now accused to the rank of such men as Lawson and Dick; still less do I mean to class present accusers with the Old Light champions; but I mean to say that that instructive portion of our history is lost on us, if it does not make all of us pause, and consider again and again before we utter insinuations so injurious."

the part of the church—in all likelihood it will be made—for a very searching inquiry. It may be found that the two professors, although they have taught nothing contrary, have yet not taught the doctrine of the Standards which they were appointed and expected to teach. It may be found that a flood of Pelagianism has for years been issuing from our divinity halls, and overspreading the churches, without the Christian people being put on their guard. It may be found that young ministers, in all parts of the country, at their license and at their ordination, have been solemnly subscribing the doctrine of our Standards, in the presence of God, with uplifted hands and eyes, while yet they understood that doctrine not in the natural and obvious sense, but in a sense not obvious, and not natural, and not received by the church. In a word, it may be found that missionaries tinctured with Pelagian and other kindred heresies, have been going forth, for years past, to our several missionary stations, and that our people, in providing for the support of these missionaries, have been exerting themselves ‘to their power and beyond their power,’ not as they supposed in making known the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, but in disseminating ‘another gospel.’”

The Synod having heard this complaint, appointed a committee to examine into it and report. Dr Marshall, who was absent when this decision was come to, stated on receiving notice of it, that he was ready to attend the committee, but requested that another should be appointed to take into consideration the pamphlet entitled “Statements on Certain Doctrinal Points, made 5th October 1843, before the

United Associate Synod, at their request, by their two Senior Professors." Upon this, it was agreed, "That the committee appointed at last sederunt to take into consideration certain statements in the appendix to Dr Marshall's publication, be also instructed to take into consideration the pamphlet published by the senior professors, referred to by Dr Marshall, as having induced him to write and publish the appendix in question."\*

The committee, having finished their business, gave in the following report:—

"That the committee, after different meetings, found that Dr Marshall did not mean to insinuate that the two senior professors, or any other of the parties referred to in the concluding pages of his book, taught what they did not believe to be true, or that they taught what they did not believe to be in consistency with the Standards of the Church; and farther, that he (Dr Marshall) spontaneously intimated his purpose to suppress the appendix altogether: whereupon the two senior professors expressed their satisfaction with the statement of Dr Marshall, disclaiming any intention of ascribing moral blame to them, and took the opportunity to add, that in their own apprehension, no language ever used by them countenanced any Pelagian error; and, in particular, that the expressions, 'opening the door of mercy to all,' 'removing legal and external barriers to salvation,' and 'the atonement having a general as well as a special reference,' are not understood by them to mean—'that the atonement, in the order of nature, precedes election; or that it opens for all a

\* Minutes of Synod.

way of salvation, without securing the salvation of any, and that then sovereign love comes in to complete the arrangement, by ordaining the elect to life.' —In these declarations, of Dr Marshall on the one hand, and of the two professors on the other, the committee cordially acquiesced, as a satisfactory termination of the matters remitted to them.

“ This report the Synod adopted ; and the thanks of the Synod were given to the committee for their diligence in this business, which they had brought to so happy an issue.”

Many now conceived the controversy at an end ; but no sooner had the Synod separated, than the seeds of discord were sown afresh, as will appear from the following chapter.



## CHAPTER VIII.

Prospect of peace suddenly overclouded by the appearance of two Letters from Dr Marshall, one of which appeared in the newspapers, and the other in the Free Church Magazine.—Death of Dr Balmer.—Expressions on his death-bed respecting the part he had taken in the Atonement Controversy.—Letter in the Free Church Magazine, from the Rev. Joseph Brown, in reply to Dr Marshall.—The Perth Memorial praying for a revision of former Doctrinal Decisions, with other Memorials for and against.—Third work by Dr Marshall on the Atonement, in opposition to the published “Statements” of the Professors.—Dr Brown’s asking of advice from his Presbytery.—Excitement connected with the approaching meeting of Synod.

THE Synod of May 1844 had scarcely separated, when two letters from Dr Marshall appeared, the one in a Glasgow newspaper, and the other in the Free Church Magazine. In a former number of this magazine, which occasionally glanced at the atonement controversy, regret had been expressed, that Dr Marshall should have published statements regarding his brethren which he now found it proper to suppress, as this, they were afraid, would destroy the good effect which his second volume on the atonement might otherwise produce. This drew forth from Dr Marshall a letter to the Editor of the magazine, the following extracts from which will give an idea of its nature and design :—

*To the Editor of the Free Church Magazine.*

"SIR,—I crave leave to offer a word of explanation, which I think is demanded of me, by a passage in your article on the 'Progress of the Atonement Controversy,' in the 'Free Church Magazine' for the present month; and from the whole tone of the article, which is very much to my mind, I am encouraged to hope that you will not refuse the request. The passage to which I refer runs in these words,— 'It now appears, that at the late meeting of that Synod (the United Secession), Dr Marshall "spontaneously intimated his purpose to suppress the Appendix altogether." We question not the propriety of the resolution, but it is painful to think that Dr Marshall should have published any statements in regard to the views of his brethren which he now finds it proper to suppress; and we are afraid this compromise will materially tend to neutralize the good effects which his volume was calculated to produce.'

"Had you seen a letter which I addressed to a Glasgow newspaper (the 'Argus'), immediately after the late meeting of the Secession Synod, this remark would have been spared. In that letter I stated, what I had intimated in the committee, that by *suppressing* the Appendix, I only meant not *republishing* it, in case the work should go to a second edition; and I stated also, that for such republication there was now less need, inasmuch as the two professors had emitted a disclaimer of unsound doctrine,—a disclaimer which, though trifling in itself, was yet to be regarded, so far as it went, as a step in the right direction.

"My first thought on reading your article, was simply to transmit to you a copy of this letter, with a request that it might be inserted in your columns. On farther consideration, however, it now appears to me that it may be as well, with your permission, to mention a fact or two for the information of your readers. Dr Balmer, as I understand, for it was done in my absence, complained to the Synod, that in one paragraph of the Appendix to my book, I imputed, or seemed to impute, to him and Dr Brown *moral blame*, that is, want of honesty in teaching what they did not believe. This was the point which the committee of Synod were in the first instance instructed to investigate; and with regard to this point, I was prepared at once to give both professors all the satisfaction they could require. I never imagined, or could mean to insinuate, that they 'taught what they did not believe to be true,' or 'what they did not believe to be in accordance with the standards of the church.' This, of course, I frankly avowed; but to what did the avowal of this amount? Did it amount to an acknowledgment that, in my opinion, the two professors were chargeable with no error? Very far from it. I admitted not for a moment, nor was I asked to admit, either that I considered the meaning they put upon the standards to be the right meaning, or their views of divine truth to be sound and scriptural. I therefore regret that, in speaking of the matter, you should have employed the word 'compromise.' Well am I satisfied that you never would have employed it had you been more correctly informed. There was, in fact, no compromise of any sort in the case.

“As to the suppressing of the Appendix, I regard it as unfortunate that any hint should have been dropped on the subject, now that I find how much it has been misunderstood, and to what mischievous uses it has been turned. I cannot altogether acquit myself of imprudence in allowing it to escape my lips; yet of the amount of that imprudence your readers will judge, when I mention the following facts: My great object in writing the book to which you refer in your article on the ‘Atonement Controversy,’ was to check the progress of the new theology as far as possible in every church, but primarily and chiefly in the church to which I belong, that of the United Secession. The book made its appearance only a few days before the late meeting of Synod. Of the ministers who came up to attend the meeting, few comparatively had seen it; and of these few I found, to my mortification, that almost every one had read the Appendix, while hardly any one had read the book. The Appendix, without the book, is in a great measure unintelligible. It is in the book, not in the Appendix, that the unsoundness of the new views is exposed, and their dangerous tendency pointed out. The Appendix merely brings home the charge of holding these views, or views nearly identical, to our two senior professors. The consequence was, as I quickly perceived, that instead of being thankful to me for having vindicated the doctrine of the church, not a few, both ministers and elders, regarded me with a feeling of irritation, and were prepared to read my work, if they read it at all, with a strong prejudice both against it and its author. It therefore occurred to me that I had

committed an oversight, and that, in order to secure a fair hearing for what I had written, I ought to have sent forth the book alone, and then the Appendix, or something equivalent to it, after the book had done its work. The more I thought of this, the more I was impressed with it; and casting in my mind how the evil might yet be remedied, I was led to conceive, that as the greater part of the impression was already disposed of, it might not be inexpedient by-and-by to issue another edition in a cheaper form, corrected in several places, somewhat abridged, and disburthened of the Appendix, which, perhaps, might circulate more extensively among our churches, and which, by coming less into collision with personal friendships and personal sympathies, might do greater good. This idea presented itself once and again during the sitting of the Synod's committee, and to this is to be ascribed the 'spontaneous' suggestion about suppressing the Appendix. I am now satisfied, as I have said, that the hint was unfortunate. I believe that its going abroad has done much harm, and has furnished 'occasion to those who were seeking occasion.' The true history of it is what I have just stated; and the public—provided, through your kindness, this letter shall reach the public—may make what use of it they please. I only take leave to intimate, that I do not consider myself bound, by anything I said in the committee of Synod, to withdraw the Appendix, or any part of it. Circumstances have transpired, which, in my opinion, not only warrant, but require me to modify the purpose I was then inclined to entertain. In the copies of the impression which are yet on hand, the Appendix

will be found exactly as it has been found in all the rest; and in my future proceedings with regard either to the work or the Appendix, I shall be guided by what appears to be most expedient. I conceive that, as Bishop Burnett remarks, in the preface to his translation of 'More's Utopia,' 'the author himself is master of his own book, and so may leave out or alter his original as he pleases.'"

This letter dissipated all hopes of peace previously cherished. In connexion with it, there was a very painful coincidence,—Dr Marshall's letter, and Dr Balmer's death, came upon the church at one and the same time. The removal of such a man—so lovely in his character—so meek—so humble—so pious—so distinguished by the purity of his taste—the admirable balance of his mind, and the extent of his intellectual acquisitions and theological attainments, must have created a deep sensation in almost any circumstances; but, occurring so unexpectedly, while placed in such a position, and after having just passed through so painful a conflict, it produced an impression on the Church and country at large, which will not soon be effaced. His death was peaceful and triumphant; and in reviewing, on the verge of the grave, the part he had taken in the atonement controversy, Dr Balmer had nothing to regret. "To a much esteemed brother in the ministry (the Rev. Mr Kirkwood, pastor of the Baptist church of Berwick) he expressed his entire satisfaction with the part which he had been led to take in those late doctrinal discussions in the ecclesiastical body in which he held so distinguished a place. Though better to-day (he said) I was yesterday so ill, that I lost all hope of recovery,

yet in solemnly reviewing, in the prospect of death, all that I have written, and spoken, and done, and felt on that subject, at those Synods, and since, I had and I have the most perfect satisfaction in the part I have taken. I have had a severe ordeal to pass, but I am far from sorry for it, for I trust light has by this means been thrown on the subject, which will be of benefit to the next generation, if not to the present." "There may be (said he) when speaking to another very dear friend on the subject, some expressions in what I wrote or spoke which I might have modified a little, but I adhere unequivocally to their whole tenor and substance; and if I have been in any thing useful to my Master's cause, it is, I am persuaded in what I have done in this matter."\* Such were the dying expressions of this singularly good and upright man, in regard to the part he had taken in the atonement controversy. His removal terminated his connexion with the controversy, so far as he himself could take part in it; but the controversy itself continued. Dr Marshall's letter rendered this, in a great measure, unavoidable. Accordingly, besides the notice taken of it in the Presbytery to which he belonged, and the articles on the subject, that appeared in the Secession Magazine, the Rev. Joseph Brown of Dalkeith, a member of the Committee to which the complaint of the Professors was submitted, addressed a letter to the Editor of the Free Church Magazine, in reply to Dr Marshall. From this communication, which was inserted in its columns, we make the following extract:—

\* Dr Balmer's Memoir, page 62.

"I begin very naturally with Dr Marshall's explanation (to furnish which is the ostensible reason for his letter in the *Free Church Magazine*) of the intimation of his purpose to suppress the Appendix altogether. He does not challenge the truthfulness of the record in using the word 'suppress,' nor does he deny that his purpose was 'spontaneously intimated.' He must have seen that it was reckoned by the committee a very important announcement; that it seemed a great step towards an amicable adjustment of affairs; that it was viewed as equivalent to the expression of regret that it had been published; and that it was regarded by the committee, and received by the Synod, as one of the chief grounds of 'the *satisfactory termination—the happy issue* of the business.' I submit, whether, in these circumstances, it is not a great impropriety of speech to call his intimation the 'dropping of a hint on the subject.' Dr Marshall says he only meant 'not republishing it, in case the work should go to a second edition.' Your readers can judge whether any one not in the secret—not made aware of Dr Marshall's mental reservation—could thus understand the language. Dr Marshall tells us what was passing in his mind during the sitting of the committee—the advantages he anticipated from 'another edition, in a cheaper form, corrected in several places, somewhat abridged, and disburdened of the appendix.' All this may have been passing in Dr Marshall's mind; but as we can only know what is in a man's mind by that which cometh out of it, the committee were ignorant of all this; for Dr Marshall never emitted a sound upon the subject.



“It is worthy of notice, too, that when Dr Marshall intimated his purpose, he was complimented on the generosity or magnanimity which it manifested, and Dr Marshall accepted the compliments, without ‘dropping a hint’ that the purpose or the reason of it was misunderstood. Dr Marshall says, he ‘intimated this in the committee,’ [that by suppressing, he only meant not republishing.] Now, how am I to answer this statement? What will your readers think when I say that not a sentence, not a word, not a syllable, of such explanation was offered to the committee? In the absence of such explanation, the committee thought Dr Marshall meant what he said—that he used the word ‘suppress’ in its ordinary signification; and, if anything be necessary to define it, the purpose has been served by the proceedings of Synod in another case. When Mr Morison of Kilmarnock was before his Presbytery, he too gave promise to *suppress* a tract, of which he was the author; and when called to account for violating his pledge, it was mentioned, as proof of its violation, that he had *lent* several copies of it, and that he had said he would not visit with civil pains and penalties the person who might publish it. Mr Morison admitted that *he had erred* ‘in not taking measures to prevent the republication of the tract,’ that he had *done very far wrong*; and yet his conduct was regarded as so highly culpable, that even after this admission, the Synod refer to his ‘blameable conduct in regard to the suppression of the tract,’ as one of the grounds for the continuation of his suspension. But Dr Marshall tells us now, that at the very time he intimated his purpose of

suppression, he meant nothing of the sort; takes advantage of the pages of the *Free Church Magazine* to advertise 'the copies of the impression which are yet on hand,' in which 'the appendix will be found exactly as it has been found in all the rest;' declares that in his 'future proceedings, with regard either to the work or the appendix, he will be guided by what appears to be most expedient; that the author himself is master of his own book, and so may leave out or alter his original as he pleases;' and that he 'does not consider himself bound, by anything he said in the committee of Synod, to withdraw the appendix or any part of it.'"

The publication of these letters was succeeded by a movement in the Presbytery of Perth, which, by a majority of its members, agreed to memorialise the Synod to revise the deed of October 1843, in which it is declared that "Scriptural harmony prevailed among the brethren," and in which there is a recommendation to avoid the expression "limited," as well as the expression "universal" atonement, as being alike ambiguous. This memorial gave rise to others, some in favour of re-opening the question, and others as decidedly opposed to it; and for a considerable period the advertising columns of the public prints were filled with memorials of this description. The excitement was not lessened by the appearance of a third volume, by Dr Marshall, designated "Remarks on the Pamphlet intituled 'Statements on certain Doctrinal Points, made October 5th, 1843, before the United Associate Synod,' &c., by Drs Brown and Balmer." In the preface to these "Remarks" Dr Marshall speaks of the movement which

had commenced in several of the Presbyteries as likely to extend much farther, "the avowed object of which (he says) is to check the doctrine of the 'Statements,' and, if possible, to put it down. To that movement (he adds) the author would lend a cordial assistance, and as he is desirous that the whole Church should engage in it, he takes leave to lay the case before the whole Church in the only way by which he can address them, through the medium of the press." Dr Marshall having resorted to the press, others resorted to it in opposition to him, and numerous were the pamphlets that were published.

During this period of excitement, Dr Brown applied to his Presbytery for advice, as to how he should act in the peculiarly painful circumstances in which he was placed. The Presbytery advised him to submit the circumstances to the consideration of the Synod, and without giving judgment in the case, requested him to publish the statement he had read for the information of the Church. Many were the prayers presented that the Synod might be wisely guided, and that its approaching meeting, which threatened to be a stormy one, might be attended with no disastrous results.

## CHAPTER IX.

**Synod of May 1845.—Decision on the Memorials.—Renewed Confidence of the Synod in Dr Brown.—Censure upon Dr Marshall.**

THE Synod which assembled in May 1845, was one of the most numerous the Secession has yet seen.

From the Report of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, it appeared that there were several classes of memorials and petitions, all bearing more or less upon doctrinal disputes. There were,

1st, Petitions praying for the reconsideration of the Synod's decisions on doctrinal matters, and petitions deprecating the same.

2dly, Petitions complaining of the character of certain documents, and of the mode in which these had been circulated and brought before the public ; and,

3dly, Papers involving personal charges.

The reading of the first class of petitions occupied a large portion of time, and the discussion which followed was of an unusually prolonged description. Various motions were proposed ; but the two following were the motions upon which the sentiments of the Synod were ultimately taken. The first was by Dr Heugh :—

“The Synod having heard and considered the

memorials, find that, as none of the Synodical decisions referred to implied, or were intended to imply, any alteration of our subordinate standards, which we retain, profess, and believe, as heretofore—that as the Synod, by their unwavering adherence to these standards, their ‘Condemnation of Errors’ in opposition to them, and their having recently excluded from the fellowship and ministry of the church those who had deviated from its doctrine, have done what seemed desirable, under the blessing of the Head of the Church, for guarding our fellowship against Pelagian or Arminian errors, or doctrines having such tendency; and having, in October 1848, declared the truth of God respecting the relation of the Redeemer and his sacrifice to those given him by the Father, as infallibly securing their salvation on the one hand; and, on the other, in relation to the world indiscriminately, being presented in the gospel as sufficient for all, suited to all, and free to all, irrespective of any distinction betwixt elect and non-elect—that, for these reasons, the Synod do not deem it expedient to enter further into these doctrinal discussions; they earnestly recommend to the memorialists, and to all under the charge of the Synod, to abstain from this unprofitable strife; and they enjoin on all ministers and probationers to beware of the use of doubtful, objectionable, and misleading phraseology in the great work of ministering the gospel of the grace of God for the saving instruction of men,—to speak as they ought to speak, using sound speech which cannot be condemned, speaking also the truth in love, commending themselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”

The second motion was by Dr Hay, and ran thus :—

“ Seeing that some recent decisions of the Synod on the subject of doctrine have been differently interpreted, and, instead of promoting truth and peace, have given rise to much dissatisfaction and discussion, as is painfully apparent from the unprecedented number of forty-seven memorials, chiefly from Sessions and Presbyteries, bewailing the differences which exist in this Church on the nature and extent of the atonement of Christ, and on the ground of the gospel call, and imploring the review of said decisions, and the rejection of whatever sentiments are unauthorised by our subordinate Standards, the Synod deem it necessary,—

“ *First*, To affirm that no decisions of Synod which have not been formally considered, and approved by a majority of Presbyteries, can alter any article in our professed creed.

“ *Secondly*, To declare that what is called ‘ the general aspect,’ ‘ relation,’ or ‘ reference’ of the death of Christ, does not imply a universal atonement, it being the doctrine of this, as of all other purely Calvinistic Churches, that in the purpose of the Father, and in his own intention, Christ offered himself to satisfy Divine justice, in the room of the elect alone; and that the free and unlimited offer of salvation through Christ made to sinners of mankind in the preaching of the gospel is not founded on any objective destination of the Saviour’s sacrifice for all men universally, but on ‘ the all-sufficient virtue of it for the salvation of guilty men, without exception, on God’s gift of his Son, that whosoever believeth in

him might not perish but have everlasting life, and on his command to all to whom it comes to believe in the name of his Son whom he hath sent.'

"*Thirdly*, To explain with reference to the deed of October 1843, of which most of the memorials on the table expressly complain, that it is not to be understood as having sanctioned the doctrine of any of the speeches or statements made in the conference which issued in that deed.

"*Fourthly*, That the Synod do now enjoin upon all ministers and probationers to beware of the use of all objectionable and misleading phraseology in their ministrations, such as, that 'Christ died for all men,'—'made atonement for all by his obedience unto death,'—'was the substitute of all in that work,'—as if the doctrine necessarily conveyed by such language were the basis of the gospel call, so that sinners cannot be called to receive Christ, nor be held guilty if they reject him, unless they can also be assured that Christ died for them,—that is, cannot be called to yield the obedience of faith to God's revealed will, unless they are first apprised of his unrevealed purpose."

On the votes being taken, there were found 243 for the first, and 118 for the second.

Against this finding numerous dissents were tendered, for reasons to be afterwards assigned ;\* while the Rev. William Scott, of Leslie, in consequence of this decision, gave in his demission as a minister of the United Secession Church.

The second class of petitions was next considered,

\* See Appendix A.

and disposed of by the adoption of a resolution proposed by Dr Eadie, which was carried in opposition to another, brought forward by the Rev. Henry Renton.

Dr Eadie's motion was as follows:—

“ That this Synod, while they regard the privilege of petition and memorial to the supreme Court, as the sacred right of all office-bearers and members, and as essential to the purity and freedom of Presbyterian polity, and while they have no wish to interfere with the Christian liberty of any minister or elders belonging to the Association, yet, feeling constrained to refer to the bitter criminating spirit in which some papers now sent up have been composed, containing heavy charges not only against individuals, but inculcating the whole Church; to notice also the unconstitutional attempts, by means of unauthorised circulars, to agitate the various Sessions throughout the country, as well as the hasty publication of Sessional resolutions in the newspapers, in the form of advertisements, agree to condemn such modes of procedure as unconstitutional, unjust, and uncharitable, and adverse altogether to the growth of that calm and holy concord without which religion can neither be sustained at home, nor the gospel propagated with energy and success abroad.”

Mr Renton's motion was,—

“ That it is the constitutional right of all the members of the United Secession Church, and more obviously of its office-bearers and inferior judicatories, by representation, memorial, petition, or overture, to bring their sentiments before the Synod, on any matters affecting the doctrine, worship,



government, and discipline of the Church; and, especially, to complain, and seek the review or revisal of any decision by which they think the principles of the Church infringed, or feel their consciences aggrieved; and, therefore, the Synod cannot countenance any attempt to invade this right, or to define the mode and circumstances in which it is to be exercised; nor on account of exceptions taken to expressions, or sentiments, or modes of publication employed by some of the memorialists on both sides, does the Synod deem it expedient to institute a minute investigation of the construction and history of the documents on the table, in order to determine whether any of them, and in what measure, are liable to censure; but recommend that, in the exercise of this right, parties would be careful to exercise Christian discretion, to observe decorum and charity in their language, and to consult the edification of the Church."

Dr Eadie's motion was adopted by a majority of 122 to sixty-eight. As in the former case, so in this, several dissents were entered.

The principal case, that of Dr Brown, now came to be considered. It was introduced by the Professor himself, in the form of a statement which he had made before his Presbytery, when craving their advice as to how he should act in the peculiarly delicate and difficult circumstances in which he was placed: "The Presbytery" (as we have previously seen) "having heard Dr Brown, agreed to advise him to submit the circumstances to the consideration of the Synod, and, without giving judgment on the paper, requested him to print it for the information

of the Church.”\* Dr Brown accordingly did as his Presbytery recommended. He published his statement, and submitted it to the consideration of the Synod, accompanied with such remarks as the occasion seemed to call for. Among other things contained in that statement, the following passages occur :—

“ Soon after the meeting of Synod (May 1844), the member of Synod (Dr Marshall) already referred to, thought proper, in the public newspapers, and in a periodical journal connected with another religious denomination, to declare that he did not account himself bound to fulfil what was considered by others as a solemn voluntary engagement; he repeated with aggravations, the offensive charges contained in the Appendix, and that Appendix continued on sale till within a few weeks.” And, again, “ Since the last meeting of Presbytery, the member of Synod, to whom I have been compelled so often to allude, has published remarks on the ‘ Statements on certain doctrinal points made before the United Associate Synod, at their request, by their two Senior Professors,’ in which he pronounces the doctrine contained in them to be ‘ unsound doctrine—not the doctrine of our Lord Jesus—not that which the Spirit of God employs for convincing and converting sinners, and building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation—not, in a word, the doctrine of the Holy Scripture, as hitherto received and taught in our Church, and embodied in our Standard Books :—Arminian doctrine, Pelagian

\* Minutes of Presbytery.

doctrine; subverting the very foundation of our hopes; entirely subverting the doctrine of Election; rendering the gospel little better than a solemn mockery—a worthless gospel—a gospel which can yield no hope, and bring no salvation;’ and it is said that ‘the straw-crowned maniac, who takes his cell for a palace, and himself for a monarch, certainly magnifies his office with incomparably greater reason than they who preach the doctrine of the Statements, and, at the same time, with a claim on our pity, which they are far from possessing.’”

The Statement concluded in these terms:—

“The time seems to me now to have arrived when I should show an utter want of a proper sense of what is due to the great interests entrusted to my care, as one of the tutors of our rising ministry, if I did not lay the facts, above stated, before the Synod at its first meeting, either in my place in the Court, or in the form of memorial and petition, requesting them, according to their wisdom, if there seems probable ground for these charges, to enter on their investigation *in due form*, which justice to the truth and me equally requires, and to do with the authors and the object of them, according to the result of the investigation; or should these charges appear so obviously without foundation, as to supersede in their estimation the necessity of investigation, that they would take measures that I should be allowed to prosecute my labours as a Theological Tutor, without the powerfully disturbing and counteracting influence of continually reiterated insinuations or charges of heresy and error; or should they be indisposed, which I do not anticipate,

or should they find it impracticable, to put an end to these, that they would be pleased to relieve me of a service which, however disposed to perform, I cannot consent to continue longer to attempt to render, in circumstances not merely so uncomfortable to me individually, but so obviously incompatible with the satisfactory attainment of its great object."

In dealing with this Statement, or complaint, it was deemed advisable to take the sentiments of the Court upon two separate points,—the one as it regarded the orthodoxy of Dr Brown, and the other as it respected the conduct of Dr Marshall.

Upon the first point, the following vote of confidence was brought forward by Dr King:—

"That the Synod having considered a Statement made by Dr Brown, with the advice and consent of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, of which he is a member, complaining of certain charges brought against his orthodoxy by parties connected with the United Secession Church, and praying the Synod to investigate those charges, or to protect him from them, or to relieve him from his professional duties,—find, that Dr Brown has acted with the greatest propriety in bringing this matter, as he has done, before the Synod; that the Court entertains a high sense of the learning, talent, and devotedness with which Dr Brown has discharged his professorial duties; and that, as respects more particularly the doctrinal questions now agitated, the Synod, satisfied with the explanation which Dr Brown has given in his Statement and otherwise, have entire confidence in his soundness in the faith, and they earnestly trust that he will continue to discharge his important

functions with equal honour to himself and benefit to the Church."

Another motion was made by the Rev. Henry Renton, to the effect,—“ That Dr Brown having brought under the notice of the Synod, by complaint, charges against his orthodoxy preferred by parties belonging to the Synod, it is the duty of the Synod to investigate these charges.” Only forty-two, however, voted for this inquiry, while 161 voted for Dr King's motion; Mr Renton and a few others entered their dissent.

The first point, as it regarded the orthodoxy of Dr Brown, being thus disposed of, the second point, as it respected the conduct of Dr Marshall, came to be discussed.

Several attempts to bring this matter to a proper conclusion were made: at last the vote was taken upon two motions. The one was proposed by Dr Henderson:—

“ That the Synod, having expressed their entire confidence in Dr Brown as their Professor of Theology, do not see it necessary to enter farther at present into the matters connected with his statement and complaint,—that they refuse any further inquiry into these matters, or expressions of opinion, and that they enjoin it upon all the members of the Court, if they contemplate in future proceeding in this matter, to observe constitutional order, and especially, if speaking or writing on the subject of doctrine, to abstain from all personalities against brethren but what they were willing to prosecute before the Church Courts in due form.” This motion was introduced by a speech which was admired for

its generous and conciliatory tone; but as it was not met by Dr Marshall in the manner anticipated, Dr Henderson took no further interest in his motion, having ultimately left the Court without voting.

The other motion was by Dr Robson to the effect:—

“That the Synod find that Dr Marshall has published in certain journals, opinions in reference to the obligation of the agreement come to between him and the Synod in May 1844, as to the suppression of the Appendix to his work, entitled, ‘The Catholic Doctrine of Redemption Vindicated,’ inconsistent with said obligation, and involving a breach of faith with the Synod;—That he has, in one of these journals, brought serious charges against many of his brethren in the ministry and eldership, on insufficient grounds;—That in a pamphlet recently published, entitled ‘Remarks,’ &c., he has reiterated these charges, especially against the Senior Professor, in a still more offensive form, charging him with teaching ‘unsound doctrine;’—That he has thus pursued an unconstitutional course, inasmuch as if he really believed such doctrines were held and promulgated, he ought to have brought the matter before the Church Courts in the only competent way;—That therefore, on these grounds, the Synod agree to find that Dr Marshall’s conduct is inconsistent with a correct sense of upright and honourable dealing, and with the constitutional order of our Church, and that he be admonished at the bar of this Court.”

Twenty-eight voted for Dr Henderson’s motion, and eighty-four for Dr Robson’s. Dr Marshall was accordingly admonished by the Rev. Andrew Elliot, moderator (*pro tempore*), after which he presented a

paper, to be inserted in the minutes, in regard to his conduct in the matter for which he was admonished, which paper, along with another from his son, the Rev. William Marshall, will be found in the Appendix.\*

After despatching some necessary business, the Synod appointed an extra meeting to be held in July. In agreeing to this, many were influenced by the consideration, that if Dr Marshall, as was supposed, intended to libel Dr Brown, it would afford him an opportunity of doing so before the sitting of the Hall, which assembled in August; but that if no libel were produced, there was a sufficiency of other matters on hand to occupy the time and attention of the Synod.

\* Appendix B.

## CHAPTER X.

July Meeting of Synod 1845.—Libel against Dr Brown by Drs Hay and Marshall.—Delay in prosecuting it sought by the Libellers, but refused.—Mode of Procedure.—The Libel.—Its several Counts, and the Synod's Findings.—Final and formal Dismissal of the whole.

WHEN the Synod met in July 1845, Dr Marshall intimated his purpose to libel Dr Brown, but in doing so, requested to know how he should proceed,—whether it would be necessary to originate the matter in the Presbytery to which Dr Brown belonged, or if it were competent for him to bring it at once before the Synod; as, in the case of his being at liberty to bring it directly before the Synod, in obedience to whose instructions he alleged he was acting in resorting to a libel, it was his intention to lay it on the Synod's table at the next meeting in May, having been advised by his friends to delay the matter till that period. Dr Brown, waiving all the objections to instant procedure which he was entitled to make, gave it as his opinion, that injustice would be done to himself, and injury to the church, were the case to be deferred for so long a time; and the Synod ultimately agreed to the following deliverance. "That having heard Dr Marshall's statement, the Synod declare that they never instructed him to prepare a



libel against Dr Brown, and that if he is disposed to prefer any libel, he must do so on his own responsibility. The Synod still farther state, that if Dr Marshall had any idea of preferring a libel, and more especially, if he had any idea that the Synod required this at his hands, he ought to have been ready with it at this meeting of Synod. That although the proper course would have been to bring it, in the first instance, before the Presbytery of Edinburgh, it is open to Dr Marshall to bring it directly before the Synod now; and that if he is resolved to proceed with a libel, the interests of the church demand that it should be preferred during the present meeting of Synod." Dr Marshall, having craved time to deliberate, intimated at a subsequent sederunt, that he would, as permitted, lay the libel on the Synod's table, without appearing before the Presbytery, but that he was not disposed to forego, what he esteemed his constitutional right of declining to proceed with it till next meeting, convinced that the libel could not be properly prosecuted without delay. To this the Synod would not accede. The opinion seemed to be that, as the subject had been previously and thoroughly discussed, and as Dr Brown had reason to complain of charges being preferred without being substantiated, and had on this account already claimed and received the protection of the Court, it was but due to him, as well as to the interests of the church, to refuse delay. The demand, therefore, for immediate procedure was repeated, upon which Dr Marshall came forward with the libel. He stated it was only a sketch which he had intended to revise and perfect, but that he was convinced, if justice

were done to the doctrines taught in the Word of God and in their Standards, it would serve its purpose. To this libel, which was read, the name of Dr Hay was attached.

"I have signed," (said he), "this document to-day; and I must say I have been a good deal influenced by my friend, Dr Marshall's sufferings, as I considered them, at last Synod. He wished to have my humble name along with his own celebrated name, and I thought that my regard for truth and the interests of the Church should not bar me, in my own humble way, from endeavouring to promote it. Another leading object I had in signing this document was, because, in my humble opinion, as no redress was procured for the authors of the forty-seven memorials at the last meeting in May, I considered that this document would be the means of setting before the Church and the world the precise points of difference between us."\*

The libel being thus laid on the table of the Synod, Dr Brown gave utterance to the satisfaction which he felt; and a motion was made and carried to take up the libel on the Tuesday of the following week, giving, in the meantime, notice of the fact to all the absent members of the Court. The period fixed having arrived, the first topics for consideration were necessarily of a preliminary description, having reference to the mode of procedure.

The question as to the relevancy of the libel, which was the first point adverted to, created some debate.

A libel consists of three parts,—the major pro-

\* Report of Proceedings.

position,—the minor proposition,—and the conclusion. In this case, the major proposition consisted of five counts,—containing a statement of what the libellers conceived to be five errors contrary to the Scriptures and to the Standards. The minor proposition,—charged these errors upon Dr Brown, and contained what was regarded by the libellers, as sufficient proof of his holding them: while the conclusion inferred that, for holding these errors, he should be censured, or dealt with according to the laws of the Church.

Such was the nature and form of the libel, and the question of relevancy was said to be this, Does the major proposition state what are truly regarded as errors by the Secession Church, or does it not? On the other hand it was contended, that the question of relevancy extended much farther than this. Besides deciding whether the major proposition truly contained errors or not, it was necessary to inquire if the libel taken as a whole, was correct in form, if the one part properly corresponded with, or reduplicated upon the other,—the proof or probation upon the charge,—and if supposing the libel were proven, it would involve censure. Without adopting either of these courses, it was recommended to the Synod to enter at once into the merits of the libel, without wasting the time of the Court upon mere technicalities. “My view is,” (said James Peddie, Esq., W.S., a member of the Court), “that we should, in a great measure, rid ourselves of all such technicalities, and proceed at once to the consideration of the charges in their order, not waiving the relevancy altogether, but con-

sidering the relevancy in connexion with the probation already before us, thus hearing parties and deciding on each count seriatim. In suggesting this course, I am proposing one which is very common in the civil courts, the judges of which are very unfond of deciding points in law until they find that the circumstances of the case render such a decision necessary. And the course is one which seems sanctioned by the following quotation from Pardovan, b. iv. tit. iii. § 3 :—‘ In causes intricate and difficult, the discussion of the relevancy may be delayed till probation is taken, and then greater light being thereby given, both relevancy and probation may be advised jointly, as the Lords of Session and Privy Council have oftentimes done.’ It is also consistent with the course which appears to have been followed by the General Associate Synod, in the two cases of libel against Mr Imrie. In these cases the probation was already before the Synod, in the shape of an examination of witnesses, taken by the Presbytery before the libel was framed, and the Synod proceeded at once to the consideration of the charges, without any separate discussion, or finding on the relevancy. It is also the course followed by Dr Brown in his Defences, and to which, therefore, he will not object; and it is one to which, I conceive, that the libellers have no title to object; for they cannot allege that it does injustice to them, if their object be, what we are bound to presume, and what I have no doubt it is, to have Dr Brown’s opinions examined, and the charges they conceive to lie against him fully considered.”\*

\* Report of Proceedings.

Mr Peddie accordingly moved, "That the Synod having heard the libel and defences, or answers thereto, considering that the publication of the pamphlet referred to in the libel, and on passages from which the charges against Dr Brown are founded, is admitted, and that the whole proof on which the prosecutors rest, is thus already before the Synod, and considering the inconveniences which would attend a separate and preliminary discussion on the relevancy, apart from the probation,—Resolve to hear the parties on each of the charges or counts against Dr Brown in their order, and then proceed directly to the consideration of these seriatim, with the view of determining whether or not the passages quoted, in so far as Dr Brown may be held responsible for them, taken by themselves or in connexion with the context, or with other statements made by Dr Brown, and which are or may be founded on by him, as explanatory of the meaning of the passages libelled, imply or teach the doctrines averred, and whether or not these doctrines are opposed to the Holy Scriptures and the Subordinate Standards of this Church ;—and after having heard parties upon, and considered the whole series of charges, and proof adduced in support of them, and explanations which may be tendered, to the effect above stated, then to give judgment on the whole cause as may seem just."

To this motion the Rev. Henry Renton proposed an amendment to the effect, "That the libel with the answers and defences having been read, the Synod now proceed, according to the ordinary and constitutional form of procedure in such cases, to consider the relevancy of the libel."

The vote being taken, Mr Peddie's motion was adopted. Several dissents, however, were entered, the reasons of which, together with the answers, will be found in the Appendix.\*

This preliminary point being settled, the first count in the libel was now entered upon. It charged Dr Brown with holding "The doctrine that God's electing decree or purpose of salvation does not define, fix, and unchangeably determine the portion of mankind whose salvation is possible, but that sinners not included in that purpose or decree have, by the death of Christ, been brought into a salvable state," a doctrine which the libellers alleged was opposed "To what is declared in the Holy Scriptures, Job xxiii. 13, 'He is in one mind, and who can turn him?' Psalm xxxiii. 11, 'The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.' James i. 17, 'The Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning;'—and in the Westminster Confession of Faith, chap. iii. sections 1, 3, 4, 'God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and *unchangeably* ordain whatsoever comes to pass.' 'By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.' 'These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

\* Appendix C.

This is the amount of what is charged against Dr Brown in the first count of the major proposition, and in the minor proposition proof is adduced from the publication in which Dr Brown, along with Dr Balmer, gave to the world those "Statements" which had been previously given to the Synod, the Statement of Dr Balmer, from which the proof is taken (there were only three out of the twelve citations taken from Dr Brown), being a Statement in which Dr Brown expressed his "entire accordance."

Of this mode of citation Dr Brown did not in the circumstances complain. In adhering, however, to his expression of accordance with the sentiments of his deceased friend, he stated that it extended to views or doctrines only, not to modes of expression, and that his own Statement, made at the same time with Dr Balmer's, should be considered as the exponent of the sense in which he understood his friend's views or doctrines.

The following is the proof advanced in support of the first count in the libel:—"You, the said Dr John Brown, in the aforesaid pamphlet, and at page 9, make use of the following expressions, or they are, as already stated, made use of with your 'entire accordance:'—"I do not regard the production of the whole assemblage of inanimate things, of living creatures, and of intelligent beings, as worthy to be put in comparison with what the Son of God has done for the non-elect,—I say, the non-elect of the human race.' 'What, then, has the Son of God done, not for the elect exclusively, but for sinners of mankind at large?' 'The change which he has effected in the condition of the non-elect is of such

magnitude that the whole range of God's moral administration presents only one by which it is surpassed, for he has brought them out of a state in which their eternal destruction was inevitable, into a state in which they will 'obtain salvation with eternal glory,' provided only they do not refuse these inestimable privileges and blessings; and again, at page 10 of the same pamphlet,—'if, then, Jesus Christ has made the salvation of sinners indiscriminately a possible, though not a certain event, if he has brought nigh to them the kingdom of heaven, which before was at an inaccessible distance, the question necessarily occurs, by what means has he achieved a result so stupendous and beneficent? Surely the answer must be by means more astonishing than even the result—by his sufferings and death on the accursed tree;' thus implying and teaching that the doctrine of the Scriptures and of our subordinate Standards, that some men are predestinated to everlasting life, others foreordained to everlasting death, and that the number of each class is definite and certain, so as neither to be diminished nor increased, is not a true but a false doctrine."

Such is the first charge of error, with the proof. The following is Dr Brown's reply:—

"In answer to the first allegation, the defender submits that the charge is not supported by the proof. In the passage quoted from Dr Balmer's speech, p. 9, "the non-elect" are not spoken of *as* non-elect (as must be obvious to every one who carefully reads the words cited in the libel, much more the paragraph to which they belong), but as forming a part of mankind-sinners as such, or "sinners of mankind



at large," for whom, according to our Standards (Conf. of Faith, vii. 3; Larg. Cat. xxxii.), "The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provideth and offereth to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation by him;" nor indeed is there any direct reference to the decree of election, as a subject of discussion, in the passage; and all that is affirmed is, that the death of Christ, by which the appointed Mediator obtained that salvation which is offered to sinners, without exception, is a nobler display of the moral perfections of God than the creation of the universe. In all this, the defender presumes to think there is no heresy.

"It is farther submitted, that 'the possible salvation' spoken of is just equivalent to the phrase 'salvable state,' in the sound sense described in the Testimony (P. ii. sect. vii. § 3), signifying that, 'so far as the requisitions of law and justice are concerned, all obstructions' in the way of the sinner to the Saviour 'are removed.' It is submitted farther, that it cannot be denied, in consistency with Scripture and our Standards, 'that fallen men, including the non-elect, are, by the death of Christ, placed in different circumstances from fallen angels,—different circumstances from those in which they themselves would have been placed had not Christ died; salvation being sincerely and affectionately offered to them [to be received] through the belief of the gospel; and the belief of the gospel, a plain well-accredited testimony (though through man's depravity it never will be believed, but under divine influence), not being an impossibility to man, in the same sense as making an atonement is.' To use the words of a distinguished

opponent of indefinite atonement,—‘ Since an infinite atonement has been made, there is no natural impossibility in the salvation of any man.’\* All events, as well as the final fates of men, are determined by God. The fall of Adam was as certain as the perdition of any of his sons can be ; but it would scarcely be counted heresy to say that, previously to his fall, his perseverance in integrity was a *possible* thing ; and we never think we are trenching on the doctrine of the immutability of the divine purpose, when we say that with a little more wisdom Charles the First might have saved his head, and his son James his crown.”—(*Dr Brown’s Statement before Presbytery*, p. 20.) It thus appears that the passages referred to do not at all, as is alleged, “ imply or teach that the doctrine of the Scripture and of our subordinate Standards (which the defender firmly believes), that some men are predestinated unto eternal life, others foreordained to everlasting death, and that the number of each class is definite and certain, so as neither to be diminished nor increased, is not a true but a false doctrine.”

The above is Dr Brown’s reply, which he read from his printed defences. Not, however, having proved satisfactory to the libellers, they submitted the following statement to the Court :—

“ The prosecutors submit that the defender’s answer to the first allegation is altogether evasive and unsatisfactory. The allegation is, that the defender asserts the salvability of the *non-elect*, or the possibility of salvation for that portion of the

\* Dr William Symington.

human race whom God has not chosen to everlasting life. The words cited in the libel, and on which the allegation is founded, are,—‘ I do not regard the production of the whole assemblage of inanimate things, of living creatures, and of intelligent beings, as worthy to be put in comparison with what the Son of God has done for the non-elect,—I say, the non-elect of the human race.’ ‘ What, then, has the Son of God done, not for the elect exclusively, but for sinners of mankind at large ? The change which he has effected in the condition of the non-elect is of such magnitude that the whole range of God’s moral administration presents only one by which it is surpassed, for he has brought them out of a state in which their eternal destruction was inevitable, into a state in which they will “ obtain salvation with eternal glory ;” provided only they do not refuse these inestimable privileges and blessings.’ The defender asserts,—‘ In the passage quoted from Dr Balmer’s speech, p. 9, “ the non-elect ” are not spoken of *as* non-elect (as must be obvious to every one who carefully reads the words cited in the libel, much more the paragraph to which they belong,) but as forming a part of mankind-sinners as such, or “ sinners of mankind at large.”’ The prosecutors submit that this cannot be admitted as a true and valid defence. If mankind-sinners at large had been meant, or if the intention had been to speak of sinners neither as *elect* nor *non-elect*, the word ‘ non-elect ’ could not have been employed, but the word ‘ non-elect ’ is employed, and employed emphatically, —‘ I say the *non-elect* of the human race.’ Is this speaking of the human race generally ? Read the

language according to the defender's evasion, and it will be—'I say a part of mankind-sinners, as such—of the human race!' The non-elect are, it is true, spoken of as a 'part of mankind-sinners, as such, but it is *that part called the non-elect*, and their salvation is said to be possible. If the defender had said 'slaves are free,' and the prosecutors had replied that the very name, slaves, indicated that they were not free, would it be any answer or defence to say, as the defender in this case has done, 'They are spoken of not *as* slaves, but as a portion of mankind at large?'

"It is farther submitted, that it is no valid defence to say, as the defender has said, that the language referred to implies no more 'trenching on the doctrine of the immutability of the divine purpose,' than is implied in the language 'that with a little more wisdom Charles the First might have saved his head, and his son James his crown.' Were we to say, *irrespective of any divine decree*, that a king might, with a 'little more wisdom,' preserve his life or his crown, we should speak sound doctrine; but were we to say that a king whom God had *fore-ordained* to lose his head or crown, might preserve the one or the other by any amount of wisdom, we should obviously trench, and trench very seriously, on the doctrine of the immutability of the divine purpose; and, in like manner, we trench on that doctrine when we say, as the defender has said, that the non-elect may be saved. It is therefore submitted, that the statements libelled do teach that 'God's purpose of salvation does not unchangeably determine the portion of mankind whose salvation

is possible,' or, in other words, 'that the doctrine of the Scriptures and of our subordinate Standards, that some men are predestinated to everlasting life, others fore-ordained to everlasting death, and that the number of each class is definite and certain, so as neither to be diminished nor increased, is not a true but a false doctrine.'

Dr Brown was now asked if he had anything to state, when he observed, that there appeared to him to be nothing requiring an answer, every thing having been already, in his estimation, answered by anticipation. Parties were then removed.

Two motions were now made, not opposing one another, but both fully acquitting Dr Brown of error.

One of these motions was proposed by the Rev. James Robertson of Edinburgh, and ran thus:—  
"That the Synod find that the charge contained in the first count, in as far as it implies that Dr Brown has taught, directly or by implication, that it is not a true but a false doctrine, 'that some men are predestinated unto eternal life, others fore-ordained to everlasting death, that the number of each class is definite and certain, so as neither to be diminished nor increased,' is unfounded, and that the Synod express their cordial satisfaction with Dr Brown's answers and defences on this point."

The other motion was made by the Rev. John Law of Dunfermline, and was as follows:—"That the Synod find that while there are various expressions in the publication chiefly founded on by the libellers, which may be interpreted as unsound; yet, from the explanations now given by Dr Brown,

it is evident he does not hold the error charged in this count."

The roll being called, the former was preferred by 204 to 70.

In the second count of the libel Dr Brown was charged with holding "that the Scriptures nowhere affirm that men are deserving of death, in its whole extent, on account of their connexion with Adam in his first sin; and that the amount of evils and sufferings to which they are legally obnoxious in consequence of that sin is not determined, either in the Scriptures, or in the subordinate Standards of the United Secession Church."

This, according to the libellers, was opposed.

"To what is set forth in the Holy Scriptures, Rom. v. 12, 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed on all men, for that all have sinned,' compared with Rom. vi. 23, 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,' and with Eph. ii. 3, 'And were by nature children of wrath even as others;' also in the Westminster Confession, chap. vi. section 6, 'Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal;' and in the Larger Catechism, quest. 27, 'The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse, so as we are by nature children of wrath, bond-slaves of Satan, and

justly liable to all punishments in this world, and in that which is to come;’ and, in the Shorter Catechism, quest. 19, ‘All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.’”

The following is the evidence adduced in the minor proposition in support of this charge :

“You, the said Doctor John Brown, in the aforesaid pamphlet, and in Note B at page 80, quoting and adhering to a speech formerly delivered by you in the United Associate Synod, and reported in the ‘United Secession Magazine’ for July 1841, employ the following expressions, or declare them to have been employed, and to be still approved of by you, viz. ‘With regard to original sin, though he did not sanction all that Mr Morison said on that head, neither Scripture nor their Standards’ (meaning the Westminster Confession and Catechisms) ‘affirmed, that all men were deserving of death temporal, spiritual, and eternal, entirely on account of Adam’s sin. Not one of the statements’ (Morison’s, we presume) ‘on this head was contradicted, either in the Bible, or their symbolical books,”—and again, in the same pamphlet, and at page 51, it is said by you, or, as has been already stated, with your ‘entire accordance;’ ‘I firmly believe that in consequence, solely and entirely, of the sin of Adam, apart altogether from personal transgression, all his posterity are regarded and treated as guilty, as legally obnoxious to certain evils and sufferings. What may be the exact amount of these evils is a different question, a ques-

tion not determined by the Synod, and which I do not presume to determine,'—thus implying and teaching that both the Scriptures and our subordinate Standards speak doubtfully on the subject of original sin, and that it is left a matter of uncertainty what we are liable to, in consequence of Adam's first transgression."

In answer to this charge, Dr Brown observed :

"In reply to the second allegation, the defender remarks, that the passage quoted from the Appendix to his Statement before the Synod is a passing remark (taken from a newspaper report of a speech delivered in this Synod), which, in reprinting, he declares to be '*substantially correct.*' He has reason, however, to believe, that in this instance it is not *verbally* correct. The words within inverted commas in the note referred to are a quotation from a document which is to be found in the report of the Synod's proceedings, as given in the *United Secession Magazine* for 1841, p. 386. In that document, the word '*entirely*' is not to be found ; and its insertion *per incuriam*, he knows not how, obscures the meaning and reference of the passage. In the extract as it appears in the Appendix, *deserving* is marked as the emphatic word. The proposition quoted by him was understood as referring not to the *measure of the punishment*, to which men are liable in consequence of Adam's first sin, but to the *nature of the obligation* to that punishment ; and the propositions he meant then, and means still, to affirm are, that that obligation is the obligation of legal responsibility, originating in the righteous but inscrutable appointment of God, not in the voluntary participation of the indi-



vidual in the guilty act, and that to express that relation, the term *deserve* in its ordinary sense is not the most appropriate word, but rather that which is employed by the apostle (Romans v. 19), 'made sinners,' or that which is ordinarily if not uniformly, used in our Standards, 'made liable to.' The quotation is thus utterly irrelevant to the purpose for which it is brought forward in the libel.

"As to the citation from Dr Balmer's speech, the defender submits, that it merely states the undoubted fact, that the Synod does not, in its 'condemnation of errors,' determine the exact amount of penal evil and suffering, to which it holds that all men are exposed by the sin of Adam without reference to their own personal violation of the divine laws; and the author intimates his determination to imitate the Synod's example. Should any one be disposed to go farther than the Synod, if he can satisfactorily show that the Scriptures and the Standards warrant him to do so, the defender will be glad to follow him.

"The defender's belief on the subject of original sin is to be found in his 'Statement before the Synod' (p. 73). 'With respect to the moral condition of all mankind by nature, my sentiments are expressed in the statement contained in the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th questions of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, though I might wish that the language had in some instances been more explicit, and demur as to some of the inferences which have in some quarters been drawn from that statement, with more confidence than conclusiveness.' The substance of the four answers referred to is this,—that in consequence of

the peculiar constitution, under which man was originally placed, commonly called the covenant of works, on Adam violating this constitution his sin became by imputation the sin of all mankind, and his fall their fall; that by this fall, the race; the whole race, every individual of the race, was brought into a state of sin and misery; a state of sin,—of original and actual guilt and depravity; and a state of misery,—of exclusion from the divine fellowship, exposure to the divine wrath and curse, and liability to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever. In consequence of the first sin of the first man, every individual of the human race, without reference to his own personal violation of the divine law, is treated as if he were a sinner, and so soon as his powers of moral thought, feeling, and action unfold themselves, thinks, and feels, and acts wrong; and so deep is this guilt, and so thorough this depravity, that pardon, and sanctification, and eternal life, can only be obtained from God in the exercise of sovereign mercy, through the atonement of Christ, and by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

“The defender begs farther to state, that he has always had a peculiar dislike of human speculations respecting this subject, and has entirely abstained from them both in the pulpit and chair; and, on all the grounds stated, presumes to hope that this Synod will not call in question his orthodoxy, respecting original sin, at any rate on such evidence as is brought forward in this count of the libel,—two utterly irrelevant statements.”

This defence of Dr Brown did not induce the

libellers to withdraw their charge. On the contrary, they gave it as their opinion, that it was evasive and unsatisfactory.

“Evasive and unsatisfactory (said they) is the answer to the second allegation, namely, that the defender teaches that the Scripture and our subordinate Standards ‘speak doubtfully on the subject of original sin;’ or, ‘that the Scriptures no where affirm that men are deserving of death, in its whole extent, on account of their connexion with Adam in his first sin; and that the amount of evils and sufferings to which they are legally obnoxious in consequence of that sin is not determined, either in the Scriptures, or in the subordinate Standards of the United Secession Church.’

—*Libel*. The allegation is founded first on the words of the defender himself, in which he asserts that ‘neither Scripture nor their Standards’ (meaning the Westminster Confession and Catechisms) ‘affirmed that all men were deserving of death temporal, spiritual, and eternal, entirely on account of Adam’s sin. Not one of the statements’ (Morison’s we presume) ‘on this head was contradicted, either in the Bible or their symbolical books,’—*Libel*,—language which would make our Standards teach that men are ‘made liable to’ death temporal, spiritual, and eternal, without their deserving it; and the prosecutors submit that the defender’s answer, instead of palliating, aggravates his offence. ‘The propositions he meant then, and means still, to affirm are, that the obligation (the obligation to punishment) is the obligation of legal responsibility, originating in the righteous but inscrutable appointment of God, not in the voluntary participation of the individual

in the guilty act, and that to express that relation, the term *deserve* in its ordinary sense is not the most appropriate word, but rather that which is employed by the Apostle (Romans v. 19,) "made sinners," or that which is ordinarily, if not uniformly, used in our Standards, "made liable to."—*Answers*. The prosecutors submit that this still represents the Most High God as holding men amenable to punishment, and actually inflicting punishment upon them, *while it is not deserved!* It is submitted that the doctrine of the Scriptures and of our subordinate Standards is, that men were 'made sinners,' not by the arbitrary appointment of God, but by 'the disobedience of the one man,' so that his sin is their sin, and his evil desert their evil desert. The defender's 'Answer,' therefore, is, to say the least, as objectionable as his 'Statement,' making an unguarded and unwarrantable representation of the divine procedure, and charging that representation not only upon our subordinate Standards, but upon the Scriptures themselves, while it is no more than a very striking example of those 'human speculations respecting this subject,' which he professes so greatly to dislike, and which he says he has always avoided, both in the pulpit and in the chair.

"Farther, the allegation rests on the words used with the defender's 'entire accordance,' viz. that 'the Synod had not determined "the amount of evils and sufferings" to which, in consequence solely and entirely of the sin of Adam, and apart altogether from personal transgression, all his posterity are legally obnoxious.' To say, as the defender says, that this refers only to the document entitled the

'Condemnation of Errors,' is no defence, inasmuch as the Synod, in that document, cannot be supposed to have set aside its Standards. Whatever, therefore, the Standards have 'determined,' the Synod has 'determined;' and the prosecutors submit, that nothing is more explicitly determined in the Standards, than what we are 'liable to' in consequence of Adam's first transgression, and this the passages quoted in the libel are sufficient to show.

"The defender's exposition of certain questions in the Assembly's Catechism given towards the close of this answer, must obviously go for nothing in the present case. So long as the defender makes such a representation of the divine procedure in the constitution called 'The Covenant of Works' as he has been shown to make, and so long as he charges that representation upon the Standards of the Church, or speaks as if we should be 'going farther than the Synod, in presuming to determine the amount of evils and sufferings to which the posterity of Adam are legally obnoxious, solely in consequence of his first sin,'—so long must he be held guilty of teaching that the Scriptures and the subordinate Standards speak doubtfully on the subject."

Dr Marshall having read this reply to Dr Brown's answer to the second count, the moderator asked Dr Brown if he had any thing to say. "I have merely (he said) to state that the replies now made by the libellers appear to me to be full either of misapprehensions or misrepresentations. It is not for me to say whether they are the one or the other. If they are misapprehensions, they appear to me to be such as are not likely to be made by any

unprejudiced mind ; and if they are misrepresentations, they are so gross that I have no fear in allowing the cause to go on to judgment on the defences I have already lodged."

The members of Synod proceeded to deliver their sentiments on the subject. The charge contained in the second count, it was observed in the course of the discussion, was virtually a double charge ; a charge, first, as to the *nature* of that desert, or obligation to punishment which is involved in original sin ; and, secondly, a charge as to the *amount* of evil which is entailed upon us in consequence of it. With regard to the first charge, Dr Brown did not deny, it was observed, that we are liable to condemnation, and are, in fact, in a state of condemnation in consequence of Adam's first sin,—he did not deny the fact, but broadly and unequivocally contended for it ; but in his opinion, this condemnation, although a righteous condemnation, for God cannot do what is wrong, was, notwithstanding, a condemnation which we do not *deserve* in the same sense that we *deserve* punishment when we ourselves commit some *personal* transgression, so that, with the generality of sound Calvinistic divines, Dr Brown preferred to employ the scriptural expression "made sinners," or the phrase in our Standards "liable to ;" he preferred to employ this mode of statement rather than the other, the term *deserve*, in its ordinary sense, not being the most appropriate term, in Dr Brown's estimation, that might be found to intimate the *nature* of the obligation to penal evil under which we are all placed in virtue of the fall of Adam. The wicked father, it was observed, brings evil upon his children, for

which he *deserves* to be chastised, but on account of which they ought to be pitied. There is, indeed, a difference between this case and the case of Adam and his posterity, although the former as well as the latter is the result of a divine constitution; but in the case of Adam and his offspring there is a peculiarity: we are legally as well as naturally united to him, and his *guilt* is imputed to us. But still, as it was observed in the course of the discussion, it is not *personal* transgression but *imputed* sin, inferring nothing more than legal obligation to penal evil. Christ suffered,—Christ suffered for *our* sins,—he suffered righteously, because our sins were legally *imputed* to him, but he did not *deserve* to suffer in the sense of being himself a *personal* transgressor.

As to the second charge, relating to the *amount* of penal evils entailed upon us by the fall, it was observed that this charge, which was founded on Dr Balmer's language, proceeded upon an entire misconception of his meaning. The point upon which Dr Balmer was speaking is the Synod's proposition which "condemns the assertion that, although all men are by nature in a fallen and depraved condition, yet no man is by nature in a state of condemnation merely in consequence of Adam's first sin." Now, Dr Balmer contended for the truths which are brought forward, or which are implied in this proposition. He held that all men are by nature fallen and depraved, and he held also that all men by nature are in a state of condemnation, *solely* and *entirely* in consequence of Adam's first sin. But as this proposition is stated, Dr Balmer, who was not only a man of singular acuteness, but who was

thoroughly read in theological controversy, conceived that the Synod's proposition would shut out from our communion such men as Jonathan Edwards, who, in his able work on Original Sin, brings out the sentiment that none are condemned simply in consequence of Adam's sin, apart from inherent depravity, or the existence within us of a sinful principle—it being Jonathan Edwards' opinion, that men are so in Adam, as their root, as that when born, they are not only depraved, having depravity conveyed to them from the root, as the branches of a tree have the juice conveyed to them from the trunk, but that the existence of this depravity or sinful principle is the ground upon which the guilt of Adam's transgression is imputed to them,—it being, in fact, according to Jonathan Edwards, the reason why it becomes *theirs*,—this inherent depravity, or sinful principle, from which all sinful actions proceed, being tantamount, according to him, to a cherishing of that sinful disposition which Adam cherished, and which in him issued in eating the forbidden fruit, so that truly Adam's sin is our sin, because, by inherent depravity, we virtually consent to it, the same sinful disposition being in us which was also in him. And this view of the subject is one which Calvin has countenanced. Dr Balmer, on the other hand, contended, that guilt is imputed apart from the existence of depravity, or of a sinful principle; that there is first imputed guilt, and then, secondly, inherent depravity, the latter being the result of the former, imputed guilt occasioning the withdrawal of the Spirit of God from the soul of man, which withdrawal is necessarily followed by depravity. Now,



our Standards, it was observed, in treating of original sin, include under this designation both imputed guilt and inherent depravity; and it is as including both that our Standards speak of "the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell," and of original sin rendering us "liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever." Now, since original sin may thus be said to consist of two parts, a question has been started, it was observed, as to the *amount* of evils incurred by imputed guilt alone, apart from inherent depravity, or the existence of a sinful principle within us; and Hodge, one of the most judicious, and at the same time one of the sternest Calvinists, when proving, in his exposition of the Romans, that the object of the apostle in the fifth chapter is to treat of imputed guilt apart from inherent depravity,—the sin of Adam being imputed to us, and penal evil inflicted without anything in us as the ground of this procedure, just as Christ's righteousness and Christ's benefits are imputed to us, without any inherent holiness being presupposed as the ground of it.—Hodge, in thus pointing out the design of the apostle, takes occasion to remark that, "as the term *death* is used for any and every evil judicially inflicted as the punishment of sin, the *amount* and nature of the evil not being expressed by the word, it is no part of the apostle's doctrine that *eternal* misery is inflicted on any man for the sin of Adam, irrespective of *inherent depravity* or actual transgression." Hodge distinctly allows, it was observed, that imputed guilt brings along with it "the loss of the divine favour, the withholding of divine influence, and the consequent

corruption of our nature," and so makes us "liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever;" but he does not admit that it was any "part of the apostle's doctrine in the fifth chapter of the Romans, that *eternal* misery is inflicted on any man for the sin of Adam, irrespective of inherent depravity or actual transgression," the term *death* in the connexion in which it occurs being a term simply denoting penal evil, without determining its *amount*. Now, Dr Balmer, it was observed, in referring to Hodge, and in alluding to this question, simply stated, that while he firmly believed "that in consequence solely and entirely of the sin of Adam, and apart altogether from personal transgression, all his posterity are regarded and treated as guilty, as legally obnoxious to certain evils and sufferings," yet he did not suppose that the Synod intended to shut out such a man as Jonathan Edwards, who, "in one remarkable passage in his treatise on Original Sin, expresses his disapprobation of the assertion, that the posterity of Adam are exposed to condemnation *merely* in consequence of his sin, and apart altogether from the existence of a *sinful principle* in their own minds;" nor did he suppose that it was the intention of the Synod to determine the *exact amount* of penal evils, flowing *solely* from Adam's sin, viewed by itself, "irrespective of inherent depravity or actual transgression." And what the Synod had not determined, Dr Balmer did not *presume* to determine; but, in saying so, it was observed, it was never Dr Balmer's intention to throw doubt upon the doctrine of our Standards on original sin, which phrase, as employed in our

Standards, includes not only imputed guilt, but inherent depravity, and in this complete and comprehensive sense, exposes us to death temporal, spiritual, and eternal,—a doctrine, it was observed, which Dr Balmer firmly held and distinctly taught. On these accounts it was argued that the charge contained in the second count of the libel was totally groundless, whether it respected the *nature* of the obligation involved in original guilt, or the *amount* of evils entailed by it.

Two motions were put to the vote, with the view of disposing of this count: one was by the Rev. Henry Renton, the other by the Rev. David Thomas. As in regard to the first count, so in respect to this, both motions fully acquitted Dr Brown of heresy. Mr Renton's motion was as follows:—"That the doctrines set forth in the second article of the major proposition as false and unsound, namely, that the Scriptures nowhere affirm that men are deserving of death, understanding by the words 'deserving of death,' legally obnoxious to death, in its whole extent, on account of their connexion with Adam in his first sin, and that the amount of evils and sufferings to which they are legally obnoxious in consequence of that sin, is not determined either in the Scriptures or in the Standards of the United Secession Church, are false and unsound as charged; but that the answers and defences submitted by Dr Brown, show satisfactorily that said false and unsound doctrine is not held by him."

The motion of Mr Thomas was, that the Synod "Find that no evidence has been adduced showing that Dr Brown has taught any sentiments on the

doctrine of original sin, inconsistent with the Scriptures, or the subordinate Standards of this Church, and that the Synod express its satisfaction with the exposition which Dr Brown has given of the sentiments which he has all along held, and now holds, as contained in the following terms, viz. :—

‘ That in consequence of the peculiar constitution under which man was originally placed, commonly called the covenant of works, on Adam violating this constitution, his sin became by imputation the sin of all mankind, and his fall their fall ; that by this fall the race, the whole race, every individual of the race, was brought into a state of sin and misery ; a state of sin—of original and actual guilt and depravity ; and a state of misery—of exclusion from the divine fellowship, exposure to the divine wrath and curse, and liability to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever. In consequence of the first sin of the first man, every individual of the human race, without reference to his own personal violation of the divine law, is treated as if he were a sinner, and so soon as his powers of moral thought, feeling, and action, unfold themselves, thinks, feels, and acts wrong ; and so deep is this guilt, and so thorough this depravity, that pardon, and sanctification, and eternal life, can only be obtained from God in the exercise of sovereign mercy, through the atonement of Christ, and by the operation of the Holy Ghost.’ ”

59 voted for Mr Renton’s motion, and 200 for that of Mr Thomas. Against this finding, Mr Law of Dunfermline and others entered their dissent.

The third count charged Dr Brown with holding

“ The doctrine, that Christ has not died for the elect only, or made satisfaction for their sins only, but that he has died for all men, and made atonement or satisfaction for the sins of all men ;” a doctrine which was alleged to be opposed “ to what is declared in the Holy Scriptures, John x. 11, ‘ I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep ;’ verse 15, ‘ I lay down my life for the sheep ;’ xvii. 9, ‘ I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me, for they are thine ;’ and, in the Westminster Confession, chap. iii. sect. 6, ‘ As God hath appointed the elect to glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only ;’—and in chap. viii. sections 5, 8, ‘ The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the Eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given him.’ ‘ To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same, making intercession for them, and revealing to them, in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation.’ ”

In support of this alleged error, the libellers adduced the following proof:—"You the said Doctor John Brown, in the aforesaid pamphlet, and at page 22, make use of the following expressions, or they are made use of, as already stated, with your 'entire accordance,' viz. 'If without a satisfaction God cannot pardon the sins of any man, and if, farther, as this Synod expressly declared about a year ago, the death of Christ has opened the door of mercy to all men,—in other words, made it possible for God, consistently with his honour and justice, to pardon all men, it follows as an obvious and necessary consequence, that the death of Christ is a satisfaction or atonement for all—that is, a universal atonement, ransom, or expiation;' and again, at page 74 of the same pamphlet, 'Not only is the fact that the death of Christ has opened to all the door of mercy declared in the Scriptures in plain terms—not only is this doctrine implied or assumed in many other doctrines and declarations, but his death, viewed in this aspect, is characterised by terms exactly equivalent to the words satisfaction and atonement, 'Jesus Christ gave himself a ransom for all;' 'He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' To enter into a lengthened critical discussion for the purpose of settling the meaning of these very important texts, would be evidently inexpedient. Let it suffice to observe that, in their natural and obvious import they refer to the human race generally, or universally, and that all attempts to restrict them to the elect, even when viewed as consisting indiscriminately of Jews and Gentiles, or of

persons of all conditions, have, at least in my apprehension, proved utterly unsuccessful." And again, at page 27 of the same pamphlet, 'If by using the expressions, "Christ dying for all," "satisfaction for all," and "universal atonement," we may be thought to teach the dogma of universal pardon, or the Arminian doctrine, that all that the death of Christ does for any of the human race, is to put them in a condition to save themselves, and that it does this for all alike, is there no risk, lest, by a scrupulous avoidance of these phrases, we keep out of view the great fact, that by his death he has done for all men what he has not done for fallen angels, opened for them the gates of heaven, and brought salvation within their reach—effects which could be accomplished only by a satisfaction or atonement?' And again, in the aforesaid pamphlet, at page 32, 'In the lectures of Dr Dick, and in the able and luminous sermons of Mr Fraser of Alloa, which will be allowed to contain an accurate exhibition of what was the recognised doctrine of the denomination, it is maintained peremptorily that Christ died, and that he made atonement, only for the elect, and the doctrine that in any sense he died for all, seems never to have occurred to either of these authors;' thus openly and avowedly pleading for the doctrine of universal atonement or satisfaction, and at the same time intimating that, in doing so, you were conscious of introducing an innovation, or of pleading for a doctrine but recently broached in the United Secession Church."

Such is the third charge with its proof. Dr Brown gave in the subjoined reply:—

" In reference to the third allegation, it is submitted, that the doctrine of the special reference of the atonement of Christ to the elect, is very clearly stated in the documents on which the libel proceeds,—that those forms of the doctrine of universal atonement, or of the death of Christ for all men, which are opposed to Scripture and condemned in our Standards, are most distinctly disclaimed by the defender's esteemed friend as well as himself,—and that there is nothing in the citations libelled at all inconsistent with these statements and disclaimers. He calls the attention of the Court to the following passages :—

(*Dr Balmer's Speech*, p. 5.)—" Contemplating the scheme of salvation and the work of the Saviour, solely in reference to those who shall be ultimately saved, I am not aware that my views differ materially, if they differ at all, from the views of the strictest sect of our religion—of Limitarians, however stringent. (*Note*, The term Limitarians was not intended to convey any offensive idea ; it was meant merely to designate those who are understood to deny any general reference in the death or sacrifice of the Saviour.) Do they hold that, from eternity, a definite portion of the human race were chosen in Christ to salvation ? So do I. Do they hold that that choice was entirely of grace—not founded on foreseen faith or good works of the persons chosen ? So do I. Even if I had not found this doctrine asserted in Scripture in express terms (which, however, I do,) I would have held it, because I see that in time God graciously saves a limited, and only a limited number, of our fallen family ; and I know



that whatever he does in time, he purposed to do from eternity. Do the individuals referred to hold farther, that the scheme of salvation may be regarded, and that in Scripture it is actually exhibited, as a covenant or compact between the first and second persons of the Godhead; and that, in the arrangements of this covenant, the Father promised the Son 'a seed' as the reward of his unparalleled toils and sufferings? In this, too, I agree with them; but at the same time I must add, that, in my apprehension, some popular writers, in their attempts to trace the resemblance between the covenant of grace, as well as the covenant of works, on the one hand, and human compacts on the other, have indulged not a little in fanciful and questionable speculation. Do our friends maintain that the Son of God was appointed to be the head and husband, the representative and surety of his chosen people? This also I admit without hesitation and without reserve. Again, I admit that the Father in appointing, and the Son in making the atonement, contemplated the elect, not, indeed, with an exclusive love, but with a love altogether peculiar, and with intentions which did not exist in reference to the rest of the race."—"Still farther, I admit unequivocally, that the death of Christ, viewed in connexion, of course, with the divine purpose, or with federal engagements,—regarded as the condition of the covenant of grace, secures, and secures infallibly, the salvation of the elect. I admit also, what, indeed, I can hardly believe any man will deny, "that all the ends to be effected by the atonement were necessarily and simultaneously present to the divine mind, in the appointment of

the Redeemer to die for sinners ; and that all these ends were present to the mind of the Son in making the atonement, and were infallibly secured by it.” —“ I am accustomed to conceive of the atonement as a *means*, and of the salvation of the elect as an *end* ; and presuming that there is some remote analogy between the operations of the infinite mind and the operations of the human intellect, I conceive the *idea* of the end as having been prior, in what is called the order of nature, to the *idea* of the means. But I do not conceive of the *purpose* of the end, and the *purpose* of the means, as having been either of them prior to the other, but rather as both united in one complex determination. Lofty and arduous as is the theme, I may add, that whatever other ends were to be effected by the interposition of the Son of God, I regard the salvation of the elect (in connexion, of course, with the divine glory) as the object which was uppermost (if I may so express it) in the divine estimation ; and I believe that, but for this object, ‘ the Prince of Life ’ had never assumed a human nature, and ‘ become obedient to the death of the cross.’ ” Many members of Synod will recollect that one of the libellers expressed high admiration of this passage when first delivered, and declared that he who held the sentiments contained in it could scarcely be far wrong in his views of the atonement, — a declaration made after having heard the whole statement, from which he now seeks to bring almost entirely the evidence for the charge of “ the heinous and severely punishable offence ” of uttering dangerous error.

(*Ibid*, p. 19.)—“ In its primary and etymological

acceptation, the term atonement signifies, I presume, not satisfaction, but the effect of satisfaction—the reconciliation between two parties previously at variance. In this acceptation the term is now rarely if ever employed. There are two other senses, however, in which it is frequently used; sometimes it is employed to denote a satisfaction or ransom strictly considered, that is, the means of pardon, the basis on which pardon is offered or conferred, that which removes legal obstacles to the exercise of pardoning mercy. But again, it is often used, or at least often understood, as conveying along with this the additional idea of provision or security, for the actual bestowal of pardon and other blessings; this security being regarded either as an integral constituent of atonement, or as its necessary and invariable concomitant. If I mistake not, this sense of the word is that which most readily occurs to multitudes in our congregations; and, accordingly, were you to tell them that their sins are atoned for or expiated, they would probably understand you to mean that already their iniquities are forgiven, and that their final salvation is infallibly insured. It is surely unnecessary to say here, that *to assert a universal atonement in this sense of the term, would be monstrous and intolerable*, and the minister or preacher who countenances any such dogma, if not ignorant of the first principles of the oracles of God, gives just ground to suspect that he is aiming at the ruin rather than the salvation of immortal souls.”

(*Ibid*, p. 29.)—“If this phraseology,” viz. universal atonement, “cannot be employed without being understood as denying the special love of the Father

and the Son to the elect, or as sanctioning the doctrine of universal pardon, let it, notwithstanding all its recommendations, be scrupulously avoided." While such is the doctrine of his late colleague, the defender begs leave to give a specimen or two of his own.

(*Dr Brown's Synod Statement*, p. 69.)—"The proposition 'Christ died for men,' has been employed in three different senses. In the sense that he died with the intention and to the effect of securing salvation, I hold that he died only for the elect. In the sense that he died to procure easier terms of salvation, and grace to enable men to comply with these terms, I hold that he died for no man. In the sense that he died to remove legal obstacles in the way of human salvation, and open a door of mercy, I hold that he died for all men; and whether, in thus dying for all, he expiated the sins of all, or made atonement for all, depends on the sense you affix to these expressions. In one sense he did; in another sense he did not. I dislike all extreme statements—all startling expressions on this subject, and would equally shrink from saying that the death of Christ was intended to express no benignant regard, to produce no merciful results, except to the elect; and that it was intended to express no regard, to produce no results to the elect, but what it was intended to express and produce to all mankind. Neither of these modes of speaking seems to me to be 'words which become sound doctrine,'—'speech which cannot be condemned.'"

(*Dr Brown's Presbyterianial Statement*, p. 20.)—"As

to 'universal atonement,' the authors of the Statements have, in the most distinct manner, declared that they consider that phrase, if used, as equivalent to expiation connected in the decree of God, and in the intention of the Saviour, with the salvation of the individual, as conveying a dangerous error. The doctrine of the Statements is just the doctrine of the Testimony in the passage so often referred to,—the doctrine of the Synod's Statement of Principles,—the doctrine of the Synod's unanimous finding in 1843, re-sanctioned by their deed of 1844,—the doctrine necessarily implied in the statement of the Larger Catechism and Confession of Faith, 'that the grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provideth and offereth to *sinners*,' (i. e. to mankind, for all have sinned), a denomination including 'his elect,' but surely not limited to them, and indeed, in the context, distinguished from them, 'a Mediator, and life and salvation by him.'" In teaching this doctrine, the authors of the Statements teach no new doctrine in the Secession Church; and, in teaching it, they have neither from the chair nor pulpit used any new phraseology.

"The phrase 'universal atonement,' as the defender lately remarked in the hearing of the libellers, he never employed as descriptive of his own sentiments, and he is not aware that he ever employed it at all from the pulpit, from the chair, or from the press. He is not even aware that he ever heard a student use it in an academical exercise, and if he had he would have cautioned him against its employment. He has taught Christianity for more

than forty years without finding it necessary to employ this term; and were he to teach it for forty years more, with his present convictions, he would never employ it. It is not a scripture term, it is not a symbolical term, it is not necessary to the expression of any christian truth, it is liable to be misunderstood, it has often been used in a false sense, and unless carefully explained, the false sense is the sense in which our people are most likely to understand it. He knows that his late colleague was not quite so sensitive as he has always been, as to the hazard connected with the use of this term; but he knows too that he did not employ it either in his pastoral or in his academical instructions.

"In conclusion here, the defender submits, whether it be not stretching his wide avowal of 'entire accordance,' a little too far, to seek to make him answerable for his colleague's estimate of the literary value of a publication, or for his opinion as to what is novel in doctrine, or in the mode of stating it in the Secession Church."

With this defence, the libellers were not satisfied, and therefore put in the following statement:—

"The third allegation in the libel is, that the defender teaches, 'that our Lord Jesus Christ has died, not for the elect only, and made satisfaction not for their sins only, but that he has died for all men, and made atonement or satisfaction for the sins of all men.' To this the defender answers, in substance, that he holds a 'form of the doctrine of universal atonement, or of the death of Christ for all men,' which is *not* opposed to Scripture, nor condemned in our Standards. This, however, he has failed to

prove. It is submitted, that our Standards condemn *every form* of the doctrine of universal atonement or expiation, and in this sense were understood by our forefathers when they said, 'We assert and declare that Christ died for all the elect, and for them only. The death of Christ, possessing infinite merit, is, indeed, in itself sufficient for the redemption of all mankind. But in respect to the Father's assignation, and his own intention, he died only for the elect. \* \* \* \* \* That all for whom Christ died shall infallibly be saved, \* \* \* \* \* we therefore condemn, and testify against the following error, \* \* \* \* \* that Christ died IN SOME SENSE FOR ALL MEN.'—*Testimony of the General Associate Synod, May 1804.* And again, 'That there is but *one special redemption*, by the death of Christ, for all the objects thereof; as he died in *one and the same respect*, for all those for whom he in *any respect* died: Or, he died out of the *greatest special love*, for all in whose room he laid down his life; with an intention of having *them all* effectually redeemed and saved, unto the glory of free grace.'—*Act concerning Arminian Errors.* The prosecutors submit that it is evasive and nugatory to bring forward statements about 'the special reference of the death of Christ,' as intended or appointed to secure the salvation of the elect, while it is maintained that his death was also intended or appointed to atone for the sins of the non-elect. The defender is not libelled for denying that Christ's death was intended to secure the salvation of his people, but for maintaining that it atoned for the sins of the reprobate. Equally nugatory is it to say, that 'one of the libellers expressed

high admiration of this passage' (a passage expounding the 'special reference') 'when first delivered, and declared that he who held the sentiments contained in it could scarcely be far wrong in his views of the atonement,' especially after that individual had expressed himself more fully in a subsequent publication, as follows:—'Now, I certainly would be disposed to say at any time, or in any place, that the man who holds these sentiments, and follows them out fairly and logically to their proper results, cannot well be far wrong on the subject of the atonement. Dr Balmer, however, enters into no explanations; he does not state the grounds of his opinions, he only states the opinions themselves; and how he connects those just specified, and brings them into harmony with many other things in his address, at least in its published form, I confess myself at a loss to understand.'—*Marshall on the Atonement*. The question is, does not the one view of the atonement subvert the other? And does not the doctrine, that Christ has died for all men, while he has only intended some to be saved, make the salvation depend, not upon his expiatory sacrifice, but upon some purpose or intention with which that sacrifice was connected? The prosecutors submit, that the real doctrine of the defender is, that as an expiatory sacrifice, Christ was equally a sacrifice for all, although *not intended* to secure to all the same benefits. 'As to universal atonement,' he says, 'the authors of the Statements have, in the most distinct manner, declared, that they consider that phrase, if used, as equivalent to expiation connected in the decree of God and in the in-



tention of the Saviour with the salvation of the individual, as conveying a dangerous error. The doctrine of the Statements is just the doctrine of the Testimony in the passage so often referred to,—the doctrine of the Synod's Statement of Principles,—the doctrine of the Synod's unanimous finding in 1843, re-sanctioned by their deed of 1844, the doctrine necessarily implied in the statement of the Larger Catechism and Confession of Faith, "that the grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provideth and offereth to sinners" (i. e. to mankind, for all have sinned), a denomination including "his elect," but surely not limited to them, and indeed, in the context, distinguished from them, "a Mediator, and life and salvation by him."—*Dr Brown's Presbyterian Statement.* In relation to one part of this sentence, the prosecutors cannot do better than employ the language of "a member of Synod," in a tract lately published. "Our senior professors, the leaders of our new theologians, 'have declared, in the most distinct manner, that they consider universal redemption a dangerous error.' What more could be desired? Let us see. WHAT universal redemption do they consider a dangerous error? Is it the universal redemption of Arminians? By no means. It is only universal redemption as understood to mean 'expiation connected in the decree of God, and in the intention of the Saviour, with the final salvation of the individual?' In this sense of the phrase they renounce universal redemption; leaving us to infer, what, indeed, they unequivocally and strenuously contend for, that they hold universal expiation, NOT

connected in the purpose of God, and the intention of Christ, with final universal salvation. Now, 'well informed men' know that this is really all the universal redemption of Arminians."—" *Our Harmony*," &c., by a Member of Synod, p. 31.

"The reference to the Larger Catechism, as teaching the doctrine of atonement, or expiation for the sins of those who shall not be saved, the prosecutors submit involves a gross misrepresentation of the Standards of the Church, as these have been understood from the beginning:—'The Presbytery did, and do hereby *reject and condemn* the tenet, that God the Father, his making a deed of gift unto all mankind, that whosoever of them all shall believe on his Son shall not perish, but have everlasting life, infers a *universal atonement* or redemption as to purchase.'—*Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace*. 'It is a deviation from the truth to hold, that, although all men shall not be saved, yet Christ, according to the purpose of God and his own intention, died for all men, actually expiating the guilt even of those who eventually perish.'—*Testimony of the United Secession Church*.

"For the defender to refer to an obscure passage of the Testimony or to late Synodical Deeds, as sanctioning his doctrine, is virtually to charge the Synod with having departed from their Standards, and does not absolve him from guilt in teaching as libelled, that the Son of God has died for all men, and made atonement or satisfaction for the sins of all men."

Dr Brown, on being asked by the Moderator, if he had any remark to make, said,—“There is only

one point to which I consider it necessary to turn the attention of the Synod. The libellers represent me as disclaiming the doctrine of the atonement held by the Universalists, but as not disclaiming the doctrine of the atonement held by the Arminians. I disclaim both, and disclaim both in the plainest and distinctest terms. I have stated, that 'the proposition "Christ died for all men," has been employed in three different senses. In the sense that he died with the intention and to the effect of securing salvation, I hold that he died only for the elect. In the sense that he died to procure easier terms of salvation, and grace to enable men to comply with these terms, I hold that he died for no man.' That is the Arminian sense of the term, and in that sense I hold that he died for no man. The Court will be able now to judge with what correctness it is stated that it is only the Universalist view of the atonement that I disclaim. Every thing else in the pleadings now laid before you in the shape of argument seems to me to be answered by anticipation. I have only to say, what I do with extreme regret, that in that pleading there is an insinuation against the honour of my deceased friend (Dr Balmer) as if his printed statements had contained sentiments different from those spoken by him."

The Court now proceeded to give judgment. No fewer than five motions were put to the vote. The first was by Dr King, to the effect—"In respect of the third count, the Synod find, that Dr Brown expressly rejects the Arminian doctrine of universal redemption, and holds the doctrine of the Reformers, of our Standards, and of the decisions of this Synod

on the subject; that the death of Christ, viewed in connexion with covenant engagements, secures the salvation of the elect only, but that a foundation has been laid in his death for a full, sincere, and consistent offer of the gospel to all mankind."

The second was by the Rev. David Robertson of Kilmaurs, and ran thus—"The Synod find, that the third article of the major proposition, viz. 'that Christ has not died for the elect only, or made satisfaction for their sins only, but that he has died for all men, and made atonement or satisfaction for the sins of all men,' is false and unsound as charged: Find also, from the answers and defences of Dr Brown, and his public declaration in the Synod, that he repudiates the doctrine of universal atonement as held by Arminians, but not in terms sufficiently definite to exhibit a proper statement of the truth upon this subject, as exhibited in the Scriptures and the Subordinate Standards of the United Secession Church; and that the gospel call, as addressed by God to sinners of mankind as such, founded on the all-sufficient virtue of the death of Christ for the salvation of guilty men without exception, on God's gift of his Son, that, 'whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life,' and on his command to all to whom it comes, to believe in the name of his Son, is clearly taught in our Standards."

The third motion was by the Rev. Joseph Brown, and was, that "On the third count of the libel, the Synod find that Dr Brown has not taught on the subject—of the design and effect of Christ's death as an atonement—anything at variance with the word

of God and the subordinate Standards of this Church; and that the charge of contravening the doctrines of the Church on this subject is unfounded."

The fourth motion was made by the Rev. David Thomas, and was as follows:—"The Synod, in regard to this count in the libel, finds that there is no evidence that Dr Brown has taught any sentiments inconsistent with the doctrine that Christ died with the design and to the effect of the salvation of the elect only, while he holds, what all along has been maintained by the Secession Church, that the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, as a justice-satisfying and law-magnifying work, is an all-sufficient ground of acceptance in the case of sinners of mankind as such, to whom the overtures of mercy and reconciliation in the gospel are presented."

The fifth and last motion was proposed by the Rev. Sutherland Sinclair, and was to the effect—"In reference to the third count of the libel, the Synod finds that Dr Brown has never employed the phrase, 'universal atonement,' from the pulpit, the chair, or the press; that he disapproves of the use of it, as a phrase which is likely to be used in a false sense; that he holds, that in the sense that Christ died with the intention and to the effect of securing salvation, he died only for the elect; and that the only sense in which he admits that Christ can with truth be said to have died for all men, is that which accords with the meaning of the phrase, 'the infinite legal sufficiency of the death of Christ, as the foundation of the gospel call,' and therefore the Synod find the charge in this count unfounded."

Here, again, the reader will perceive that all the motions acquit Dr Brown of heresy ; the farthest to which the second goes, in the way of finding fault, being simply to declare, that Dr Brown, in repudiating " the doctrine of universal atonement, as held by Arminians," does so, " but not in terms sufficiently definite to exhibit a proper statement of the truth upon this subject," an opinion which the mover and supporters of this motion were entitled to hold and to express, just as other members were entitled to hold and to express an opinion completely the reverse.

The result was—

97 voted for the first motion ;  
 49 for the second ;  
 84 for the third ;  
 8 for the fourth ; and  
 11 for the fifth.

The two motions, supported by the largest number of votes, were then put by the Moderator, when 111 voted for Dr King's, and 86 for Mr Brown's.

The Rev. David Robertson entered his dissent, to which several others adhered, the reasons of which, with the answers, may be found in the Appendix.\*

The fourth count was then entered on, charging Dr Brown with holding—

" The doctrine that the obedience unto the death of the Son of God, is sufficient for the salvation of men, not from its intrinsic worth, which is allowed to be infinite, but from a certain divine appointment or intention, ordaining it to be sufficient; and that its

\* Appendix D.

efficacy to save men depends, not on its completeness as a full and proper satisfaction to divine justice, in their room—a vicarious sacrifice, which has expiated their sin, and put it away—a price of infinite value, paid for their redemption, by which they have been bought or purchased; but is derived chiefly, if not entirely, from another divine appointment, with regard to its results, without which other appointment, although it has made atonement for all men, it would avail to the salvation of none.”

This was the doctrine charged, which was alleged to be opposed “to what is declared in the Holy Scriptures, Rom. iii. 25, 26, “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins, —to declare his righteousness that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.” Eph. v. 2, “Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour.” Heb. x. 11, 12, “Every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins, but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.” Matt. xx. 28, “The Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life, *λυτρον αντι πολλων* a ransom for many.” Acts xx. 28, “Feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.” 1 Cor. vi. 20, “Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s;” vii. 23, “Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men.” 1 Tím. ii. 6, “Who gave himself, *αντιλυτρον*,

a ransom for all;”—and in the Westminster Confession, chap. xi. sect. 1, 3, 4, “Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous, not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ’s sake alone, nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness, but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ to them, they receiving and resting on his righteousness by faith.” “Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father’s justice in their behalf.” “God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification.”

In evidence of Dr Brown having taught error on this point, the libellers adduced the following:—

“You, the said Dr John Brown, in the aforesaid pamphlet, and at page 48, make use of the following expressions, or they are made use of, as already stated, with ‘your entire accordance,’ viz. ‘Intrinsically considered, and apart from the divine appointment, the death of Christ, notwithstanding the infinitude of its merit, is not sufficient for the salvation of a single soul; it is not an atonement at all.’ ‘The Saviour’s sacrifice can be sufficient for those only for whom it was offered or intended, and, of course, if sufficient for all men, it must have been intended for all men.’—And again, at page 68 of the same pamphlet, it is affirmed by you, in your own proper person, and in



your own words, ' With respect to the design of the death of Christ, and the atonement for sin made by that death—the principal subject of discussion among us—I am equally persuaded that, *by the divine appointment*, the death of Christ removes ' the legal bars' in the way of human salvation generally, and ' opens a door of mercy' to mankind, making it consistent with the perfections of the divine character, and the principles of the divine government, to make a free offer of salvation, through the faith of the gospel, to every human being ; and that, *by divine appointment*, the death of Christ secures the actual salvation of those whom God, in sovereign mercy, from all eternity, has elected to everlasting life. The order in which these two, equally true and perfectly consistent propositions, ought to stand in a systematic statement of Christian truth, seems to me a matter, if not of absolute indifference, of very subordinate importance,'—thus implying and teaching, that the sufficiency of the death of Christ depends not on its intrinsic worth as the death of a divine person ; but on a certain appointment ; and that its efficacy depends, not on its being a proper satisfaction to justice, the punishment due to the guilty borne by their Surety in their name ; not on its being a vicarious sacrifice offered and accepted for them ; not on its being the price more valuable than corruptible things, such as silver and gold, by which they have been purchased ; but is derived from a certain superadded appointment, or destination, connecting with it saving results in the case of some, and leaving it unconnected with such results in the case of others, while it has made atonement or satisfaction equally for all ;—farther imply-

ing and teaching that the death of Christ is not properly the redemption of his people, but only a medium or expedient through which the blessings of redemption are conveyed to them;—farther implying and teaching, that the atonement is, in its own nature, indefinite, having no reference to one man more than to another, and that ‘the place for election lies in the application;’—farther implying and teaching, that the justice of God, displayed in the atonement, is not justice in the proper sense, but in some peculiar sense;—*lastly*, Contradicting virtually, if not directly, the apostolic statement, that God has set forth Christ as a propitiation to declare his righteousness, and that his righteousness actually is declared, in the justification of him who believes in Jesus.”

In reply to the above fourth allegation, Dr Brown submitted, “That his departed friend and himself ascribe to divine appointment no place in its reference to the death of Christ as a sufficient atonement, but what sound divines generally have ever done. They have always taught that the death of Christ could not have been a sufficient atonement for any, had it not been the death of a divine person—had it not been a proper satisfaction to justice—had it not been the endurance of the punishment of the guilty in their room—had it not been a vicarious sacrifice—had it not been a price more valuable than corruptible things. They have always taught this, but they have also taught that divine appointment was necessary to constitute this death of Christ in itself intrinsically valuable enough to be the *λυτρον* for all sinful beings, sufficient as a propitiation for all who believe.

“The defender readily admits that he does not

accord with the doctrine of the libellers, which, if he does not misapprehend their meaning, is, that, apart from divine appointment, the death of Christ is not only sufficient *to be* an atonement—but is a sufficient atonement. On the contrary, he holds that apart from divine appointment the death of Christ could not have been an atonement at all.

“Ebenezer Erskine (*Collection of Sermons*, p. 211) asserts ‘an *ordinate* sufficiency in reference to the elect, and a *legal* sufficiency by which the law and its penalty is fully answered, in so much that neither law nor justice is any obstruction or bar in the way of a sinner’s salvation, that believes in him. All the charges that law and justice had against the poor sinner are cancelled.’ And he represents the last of these as the ground of faith to sinners:—‘It is not,’ says he, ‘the *ordinate* sufficiency of the death of Christ that we are commanded to preach, which would lead us among the secret decrees of God, which do not belong to us; it must needs be the *intrinsic* and *legal* sufficiency of the death of Christ that is to be held forth as the ground and foundation of faith to sinners of mankind. Hence are those universal and extensive expressions in Scripture,—John i. 29, “Behold the Lamb of God ‘who taketh away the sin of the world.’” 1 John ii. 2, ‘He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world.’” 1 Tim. iv. 10, ‘He is the Saviour of all men, especially of them who believe.’ All mankind have such an interest in the death and satisfaction of Christ as the devils have not.”—So far the Father of the Secession Church.

" It is quite obvious that both the ordinate and the legal sufficiency result from divine appointment. Christ's divine dignity makes his death sufficient to be an atonement for all; but divine appointment is necessary to make it a sufficient atonement for any. The defender farther submits, that, though in the citation contained under this head, '*the* divine appointment,' is twice mentioned, this is by no means equivalent to there being 'two divine appointments.' This is the libellers' statement, not his. He supposes that both the conversion and salvation of elect sinners, and the call of the gospel to mankind-sinners as such, and the connexion of both, with the death of Christ as a sufficient atonement, will be admitted even by the libellers to be the result of divine appointment. He does not anticipate that either the facts or their divine appointment will be denied."

With this defence the libellers were not satisfied, and offered the following in reply :—" The prosecutors submit that the quotations from Ebenezer Erskine, ' the Father of the Secession Church,' about *ordinate* sufficiency, instead of serving the cause of the defender, are directly opposed to him, and totally subvert his doctrine. According to Erskine, — ' It is not the ordinate sufficiency of the death of Christ that we are commanded to preach, which would lead us among the secret decrees of God, which do not belong to us; it must needs be the intrinsic and legal sufficiency of the death of Christ that is to be held forth as the ground and foundation of faith to sinners of mankind.' And again, the *ordinate* sufficiency has a reference to the elect. According to the defender, in the present case, there

is no sufficiency at all without the ordinate sufficiency. It has reference not to persons, but to the atonement itself, so that we could not preach a sufficient atonement at all unless we preached an atonement *ordained to be sufficient*. 'The Father of the Secession Church,' therefore, and the father of the statements libelled, are wide as the poles asunder; the former speaking only of an ordination restricting to the elect an atonement in itself infinitely sufficient; the latter speaking of an ordination to make an atonement sufficient, which, 'intrinsically considered, would not be sufficient for the salvation of a single soul;' and thus exposing himself to the charge as libelled, of teaching 'that the obedience unto the death of the Son of God is sufficient for the salvation of men, not from its intrinsic worth, which is allowed to be infinite, but from a certain divine appointment or intention, ordaining it to be sufficient.'

"The prosecutors would remark farther, that under this count was included the doctrine that the efficacy of our Lord's atonement 'to save men, depends not on its completeness as a full and proper satisfaction to divine justice in their room—a vicarious sacrifice which has expiated their sin and put it away—a price of infinite value paid for their redemption, by which they have been bought or purchased; but is derived chiefly, if not entirely, from another divine appointment with regard to its results, without which other appointment, although it has made atonement for all men, it would avail to the salvation of none.' On this part of the count the defender says nothing, and the prosecutors, therefore, take for granted that he admits it as libelled."

On the above being read by Dr Marshall, Dr Brown said, " The libeller labours under a mistake, if he supposes that I have admitted the justice of any part of this charge. In my own apprehension, the charge has been fully rebutted in my answers and defences.

The Synod now proceeded to give judgment. In the course of the discussion, it was asserted that Dr Brown's sentiments seemed to imply that the *sufficiency* of Christ's death to accomplish the salvation of his people, depended entirely upon a divine appointment to that effect, a doctrine, it was alleged, which set aside the intrinsic worth of Christ's death, as being that of a divine person; for if its *sufficiency* to save arose from a divine appointment to that effect, might not the blood of bulls and of goats have sufficed, had God chosen to appoint it for that purpose? But this, on the other hand, it was contended, was a complete misapprehension of Dr Brown's doctrine. Dr Brown, it was observed, never maintained that the *sufficiency* of the atonement to save, depended entirely upon a divine appointment making it sufficient for that purpose. What he contended for was, that its sufficiency to save grew out of the dignity of Christ's person, on account of which it was appointed to be a propitiation for sin, being in this respect sufficient to accomplish the ends for which an atonement was required. To accomplish these ends, the blood of bulls and of goats was altogether insufficient, and no appointment, according to Dr Brown, could have made the shedding of such blood a sufficient propitiation for human guilt. But although the death of Christ has thus an intrinsic fitness or sufficiency in itself, for

being an atonement, and for accomplishing all the ends for which an atonement is necessary, yet still this blood must be shed *as an atonement*; and the persons for whom this atonement is provided, and all the ends it is to effect, must be defined and determined by divine appointment. Nothing is more common for us than to say, that the death of Christ, considered in itself, is of such infinite merit and sufficiency, that, had God chosen, it might have saved the fallen angels. But it does not. And why? Just because, although sufficient, in itself, to save them all, so far as mere sufficiency of worth is concerned, it is, notwithstanding, not sufficient to save a single one of them; because, amongst other reasons, it was not appointed for that purpose. Divine appointment, therefore, is necessary, not to *impart* intrinsic sufficiency to the death of Christ, but to give it, as it were, direction—to define the purposes it is meant to serve. Has the death of Christ secured the salvation of the elect? It was *sufficient* to secure it, and it was intended to secure it, and it was *appointed* to secure it. Has the death of Christ opened the door of mercy to all? It was *sufficient* to open the door of mercy to all, and it was intended to open the door of mercy to all, and it was *appointed* to open the door of mercy to all. All its ends were divinely appointed; and what Dr Brown maintained, it was observed, is, that it will not do to say that the special ends were appointed, and not the general; or that the general ends were appointed, and not the special; but that both were included in *the one divine ordination* of a Saviour for our race. The doctrine, therefore, impugned in the

fourth count, as held by Dr Brown, was nothing more nor less, it was observed, than the doctrine of the Scriptures, and of our subordinate Standards, and of the Synod; the doctrine, namely, that the death of Christ was *appointed* to take place—that it was ordained *to be* a propitiation for sin—that it was *sufficient* to be thus ordained for such a purpose—its sufficiency for accomplishing the great ends contemplated by an atonement, being the reason why it was appointed to be an atonement,\*—whilst, at the same time, by divine appointment, *all the ends* for which Christ died, special and general, were fixed upon from eternity, and entered into God's one grand purpose of mercy—Dr Brown's doctrine being that of the Synod, as expressed in one of its recent official documents, which declares, “that *all the ends to be effected* by the atonement, were necessarily and simultaneously present to the divine mind in the *appointment* of the Redeemer to die for sinners, and that all these ends were present to the mind of the Son in making the atonement, and infallibly secured by it;” or, as it is expressed in the “Statement of Principles,” “as whatever God does, he purposed to do, working all things according to the counsel of his own will, this general reference of the atonement must have had a place in the everlasting *purpose* of God, as well as its special relation to the elect.”

With regard to this count, upon which Dr Marshall laid the greatest stress, there appeared to be but one feeling in the Court, that it was utterly

\* “It is sufficient, not because it was appointed; but it was appointed because it is sufficient.”—*Dr Balmer's Academical Lectures*, p. 396. See farther, Appendix E.



groundless. Four motions, accordingly, all dismissing the charge, were put to the vote.

The first was by the Rev. William Fraser, to the effect—"That on the fourth count, the Synod find that Dr Brown is not justly chargeable with the heresy here ascribed to him by the libellers; for while he maintains the necessity of a divine appointment to constitute the death of Christ a sufficient propitiation for the sins of any (a precious truth taught in the Holy Scriptures, and the subordinate Standard books of our Church), he also no less plainly asserts, that the death of Christ could not have been an effectual atonement for the sins of men, 'had it not been the death of a divine person—had it not been a proper satisfaction to justice—had it not been the endurance of the punishment of the guilty in their room—had it not been a vicarious sacrifice,' and of infinite value."

The second was made by Mr Thom, elder—"That on the fourth count of the libel, the Synod find that Dr Brown has not taught or published anything inconsistent with the Scriptures and the subordinate Standards of our Church, and that this part of the libel is altogether unfounded."

The third was made by the Rev. Andrew Thomson—"That in regard to the fourth count, the Synod find, that in so far as it states that Dr Brown holds that all the ends served by the death of Christ, both as regards mankind at large, and those who are actually saved, are the result of divine intention and appointment, Dr Brown holds nothing but what is taught in the word of God, and maintained in the subordinate Standards of our Church: Find also,

that in so far as it charges Dr Brown with holding that the sufficiency of the death of Christ, and its efficacy in the salvation of men, depend exclusively on the divine appointment, apart altogether from its intrinsic worth as the death of a divine person, and as a satisfaction to divine justice, the charge is wholly unfounded."

And the fourth was made by the Rev. H. Renton—"That the fourth article in the major proposition of the libel is ambiguous; declare the same irrelevant, and dismiss the charge founded upon it."

A vote<sup>a</sup> was taken on these four motions, when there was found, for the first, 3; for the second, 115; for the third, 67; and for the fourth, 49. The first and fourth motions were then dropped; and the mover of the third having craved leave to withdraw it in favour of the second, and no member having objected, the third motion was allowed to be withdrawn, and the Synod adopted the second, and, in terms of said second motion, found accordingly.

The fifth and last count in the libel now came to be considered, charging Dr Brown with holding "the doctrine that Christ, in dying, was not the substitute of his own people alone, but was the substitute also of others, and, in that capacity, bore the punishment due to the sins of others;" a doctrine in opposition, as was alleged, "to what is declared in the Holy Scriptures, Isa. liii. 5, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities;' verse 6, 'The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' Rom. v. 8, 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died, *ὑπερ ἡμῶν, for us.*' 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He

hath made him to be sin, *ὑπερ ἡμῶν*, for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' Gal. iii. 13, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse, *ὑπερ ἡμῶν*, for us.' 1 Pet. iii. 18, 'Christ also hath once suffered for sins, *δικαίος ὑπερ ἀδικῶν*, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;' and in the Westminster Confession, viii. 5, 8; xi. 1, 3, 4, already quoted; also in the Larger Catechism, Quest. 44, 'Christ executeth the office of a priest in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people, and in making continual intercession for them.'"

The following is the proof:—"You, the said Dr John Brown, in the aforesaid pamphlet, and at page 39, make use of the following expressions, or they are made use of, as has been already stated, with your 'entire accordance:'—"In some sense, as I conceive, he (Christ) was the substitute of all, though not of all in precisely the same sense.' And farther, at page 74 of the same pamphlet, you, in your own person, and in your own words, make the following assertion: 'As to the question, whether Jesus Christ was the substitute of all men, in any sense, and if so, in what sense, I apprehend, that if our Lord suffered evils, which were the manifestation of the divine displeasure against mankind generally, which he did when he "diéd the just for the unjust," that thus far he was their substitute; but since our Lord did not suffer these evils with the intention, or to the effect, that mankind should be universally saved, he was not their substitute to the same extent in which he

was the substitute of those whom, when he gave himself the just one in the room of the unjust, he, by that offering of himself, intended to bring, and whom he actually does thus bring to God;’ thus effectually subverting and rendering void the great cardinal doctrine of our Lord’s substitution, *first*, By teaching that there are different kinds or degrees of substitution; *secondly*, By teaching that our Lord might stand in the room of the sinner, bearing the punishment due to him, and yet the sinner not be ultimately set free; and, *lastly*, By teaching the doctrine already libelled, that the salvation of the sinner is secured, not by a substitutionary sacrifice offered and accepted in his room, but only by some kind of purpose, or intention, or appointment, connected with that sacrifice.”

In answer to this, Dr Brown stated,—“The defender, in adverting to the fifth and last allegation, has to remark, that the explanatory statement lately made by him in the hearing of the libellers, as it was sufficient, so it ought to have convinced the libellers that there is no ground for this charge. He will trespass on the patience of the Court only this once more, in laying before them what they have already heard and considered. (*Dr Brown’s Presbyterian Statement, as read in Synod, p. 21.*)—‘As to a “double atonement and a double substitution,” I confess myself somewhat at a loss to comprehend what is meant by those terms. The only atonement I know of, that on which I rest my own hope for salvation, and on which I call my fellow-sinners to rest theirs, persuaded that it will well sustain them, is “the offering of the body of Christ once for all,”

—the sacrifice he presented, when “through the Eternal Spirit he offered himself to God;” but with the Synod I believe that this one atonement has various aspects,—an aspect to mankind-sinners as such, and an aspect to the chosen of God. Dr Balmer, after a quotation, in which the doctrine of a double substitution or universal covenant *quasi* representation is very strongly asserted, uses the following language:—“Some expressions in the preceding extracts I am disposed to receive with certain qualifications; but to the great leading principle asserted in them, the principle that the atonement is a general remedy, that it has opened the door of mercy to all, I give my cordial and unqualified assent.” In another passage, he says, “*In some sense*, as I conceive, Christ was the substitute of all, though not of all in precisely the same sense.” In ‘my Statement’ (the defender here refers to the passage quoted in the libel) ‘I adverted to the question, because I had been specially requested to explain myself on this point. I endeavoured to do so in as explicit a manner as I could, and I adhere to the statement then made, though not disposed to stickle for the propriety of every word in it; and on review, not regarding it as entitled to the praise of extreme precision, which my too partial friend has ascribed to it. It seems, however, to have been misapprehended, and I shall make one other attempt to render myself intelligible.

“ ‘Christ did what a certain number of mankind were bound to do, and suffered what they were bound to suffer; he fulfilled the precept, and he sustained the penalty of the law to which they were

subject, and which they had violated. In consequence of this, these persons are redeemed,—called and justified, sanctified and saved; and all this was the result of divine appointment, and was the intention of Christ in obeying and suffering. He was treated according to their obligations, and they are treated according to his deserts; and both these events are the effect of divine appointment, and they are by divine appointment necessarily connected with each other. This is the substitution of Christ in the room of his peculiar people. From the absolute perfection of our Lord's work, it follows, that in doing what was necessary, and in connexion with covenant engagements, effectual for the salvation of his people, that he did what all men are bound to do, he suffered what all men deserved to suffer, for this he unquestionably did when he obeyed the precept and endured the penalty of the divine law. What else, what more, were they bound to do? what else, what more, were they bound to suffer than this? In consequence of this, a sincere offer of pardon and salvation is made to mankind-sinners as such; and in this case, too, every thing is the result of *the* divine appointment, every thing is according to the intention of our Lord in obeying and suffering. The work of Christ is one; but it serves more purposes than one, and it was intended to serve more purposes than one; and all the purposes to be served by it were present to the divine mind in appointing it.

“Whether the relation in which our Lord stood to the race,—to mankind-sinners as such, in obeying the precept and enduring the penalty of the law (for that he did bear such a relation very few theolo-

gians have denied), should be designated a *substitution* as well as the relation in which he stood to those saved by him, has been a question among Calvinistic divines. It is plainly, however, with those who admit the existence of such a relation, a question as to the meaning of a word or the propriety of a phrase, and not as to the truth of a doctrine. If it be understood to mean no more than what is just now stated, the use of the word implies no error. If by being a substitute is meant not only that Christ did by divine appointment what certain individuals were bound to do, and suffered what they deserved to suffer; but also, that by divine appointment, and in his intention, this was done that they might obtain deliverance from penal evil, and possession of eternal life merited by his obedience and suffering, then certainly Christ is the substitute only of his elect people: but if He is to be considered a substitute who does what another is bound to do, and suffers what he deserved to suffer, and by doing so, secures advantages which, otherwise, that individual could not have enjoyed, and offers him the full advantage naturally resulting from this interposition, which he, however, perversely rejects,—then the term is accurately enough descriptive of the relation in which Christ stands to mankind-sinners as such. The propriety or impropriety of the use of the phrase is another question. If it convey a false meaning to some minds, if it be even disagreeable to some brethren, the employment of it may well be dispensed with; for the doctrine may be taught without speaking of a double substitution, and, in my opinion, much better taught without, than in, this

phraseology. But the doctrine of the general aspect of the death of Christ must not be given up. This is an essential principle of christian truth."

As to the four former defences,—so to the fifth and last, the libellers gave in objections. They were as follows:—

"The prosecutors submit that the answer given to the fifth and last allegation is nothing better than an evasive explanation, and cannot be accepted as setting aside the proof brought forward in the libel. The defender is not charged with using the phrases 'double substitution' and 'double atonement,' but he is charged with teaching that our Lord Jesus Christ is 'in some sense the surety and substitute of others besides the elect.' The substance of the defender's explanation is, that the sufferings which Christ endured were the sufferings due to all men, and as the whole benefit, resulting from these sufferings, is freely offered to all men, therefore it may be made a question, and has been made a question among Calvinistic divines, whether or not He may be called the *substitute* of all men? Who these 'Calvinistic divines' are, we are not told, but we submit that the question at issue is not to be decided by such an appeal. The question is, Did Christ stand in the room of all men in bearing the punishment of sin? In the statement libelled we are distinctly told that this was the case. 'If our Lord suffered evils, which were the manifestation of the divine displeasure against mankind generally, which he did when he 'died the just for the unjust,' that thus far he was their substitute; but since our Lord did not suffer these evils with the intention or to



the effect, that mankind should be universally saved, he was not their substitute to the same extent in which he was the substitute of those whom, when he gave himself the just one in the room of the unjust, he by that offering of himself intended to bring, and whom he actually does bring to God.' In the explanatory statement now brought forward, we are told, 'If by being a substitute is meant not only that Christ did by divine appointment what certain individuals were bound to do, and suffered what they deserved to suffer; but also, that by divine appointment and in his intention, this was done that they might obtain deliverance from penal evil and possession of eternal life, merited by his obedience and suffering, then certainly Christ is the substitute only of his elect people: but if HE is to be considered a substitute who does what another is bound to do, and suffers what he deserved to suffer, and by doing so, secures advantages which, otherwise, that individual could not have enjoyed, and offers him the full advantage naturally resulting from this interposition, which he, however, perversely rejects,—then the term is accurately enough descriptive of the relation in which Christ stands to mankind-sinners as such."

"Here it is distinctly enough intimated, that although our Lord was not the substitute of all men, 'with the intention that they might obtain deliverance from penal evil, and the possession of eternal life,'—a doctrine held only by the advocates of universal salvation, he was yet their substitute, so far as by suffering 'what they deserved to suffer,' to secure advantages for them which they per-

versely reject. There is, therefore, according to the defender, a double substitution in fact, although he does not call it by that name; and the prosecutors submit that nothing can more effectually subvert the cardinal doctrine of our Lord's substitution than such teaching. There is, besides, an intimation that our Lord suffered for all men what they deserved to suffer, while the degree of advantage resulting from his sufferings was less in the case of one portion of men than in the case of another—a statement implying that our Lord might suffer for sinners, and yet the sinners not be effectually delivered. And, finally, the explanation of this difference is, that in the one case there was an 'intention' that they should obtain deliverance, while in the other there was no such intention—that it is not the substitutionary sacrifice, but the superadded appointment which saves the sinner. All which things, taken together, fully bear out and justify the allegation, that the defender is guilty of teaching that 'Christ in dying was not the substitute of his own people alone, but was the substitute also of others, and, in that capacity, bore the punishment due to the sins of others.' And also of 'subverting and rendering void the great cardinal doctrine of our Lord's substitution: *first*, By teaching that there are different kinds or degrees of substitution: *secondly*, By teaching that our Lord might stand in the room of the sinner, bearing the punishment due to him, and yet the sinner not be ultimately set free: and, *lastly*, By teaching the doctrine already libelled, that the salvation of the sinner is secured, not by a substitutionary sacrifice offered and accepted in his room,

but only by some kind of purpose, or intention, or appointment, connected with that sacrifice.’”

In reply to the above, Dr Brown said, “The character of the pleading on this count, like that of all the pleadings that have gone before it, is reiterated asseveration. It begins with a declaration that my answer is an evasion of the charge. My reply is, that my answer is a fair meeting of the charge; and I am perfectly satisfied with the thought that this Court is about to decide between my libellers and myself.”

This last charge, like the former ones, was fully considered. In the course of the discussion, Dr Henderson said, “that this Synod on former occasions, at the close of other discussions in the controversy, which had led to the production of this libel, had deemed it proper to caution its members against the use of ambiguous language. There was another caution not less necessary, that against our being ready to make our brethren offenders for a word. There was a deep-seated ambiguity in human language, which it was impossible to free it from altogether by our most careful definitions. While every one certainly should be as guarded as possible in his own expressions, he should show himself disposed, if those of another seem capable of different senses, by all means to take them in the sound sense. It had had a painful effect on his own mind to be obliged, in consequence of the agitation kept up for some time past on doctrinal questions, not only to watch over his expressions, but to do so under the impression that possibly some of his hearers might, if these were not very precise, twist and pervert

them, so as to make them teach heresy. And he feared that many of late years in listening to the public discourses of ministers, instead of receiving with meekness the engrafted word, had been listening with jealous ears to discover whether the preacher were of what have been called the old or the new views; and that thus, though their intellectual powers might be exercised, their hearts were left untouched, their consciences unawakened.

“With regard to the count in the libel now under consideration, he had heard since he came here that it had been said on high authority\* (not that of one connected with the body) that some of Dr Balmer’s expressions, through the medium of which the charge of error was sought to be fastened on Dr Brown, are not very felicitous. Notwithstanding the high veneration with which he regarded the memory of his deceased friend, he was not disposed to deny that there might be some truth in the allegation, taking it in connexion with what is reported to have been added by the same authority, that this shows the wisdom of Dr Balmer’s remark, that there are some points so nice that it is better or safer for us not to attempt strictly to define them.

“It should be recollected how Dr Balmer was led into the use of this expression, ‘that there is a sense in which Christ may be said to have been the substitute of all men, though not in the same sense, or to the same extent in which he was the substitute of the elect.’ It was evidently in consequence of his having been pressed to say how he reconciled what

\* Understood to be the Lord Justice Clerk, who took a lively interest in the proceedings.

he taught in regard to the extent of the atonement with the doctrine of Christ's substitution in the room of his people. There is just the same ambiguity in speaking of a substitution of Christ in the room of all, that there is in speaking of his atonement as made for all. If there be any sense in which it may be truly said that Christ died for all, in the same sense it may be said that he was the substitute of all. But we have agreed to avoid the use of the phrase *universal* atonement, because it is liable to be misunderstood, and for the same reason let us avoid speaking of the substitution in the room of all. The language objected to has indeed never been used by any who maintain the general reference of the death of Christ, but as they have been pressed with this objection to their doctrine by those who deny it, that if it were true, Christ must have been the substitute not only of his chosen, his redeemed, but of all, Dr Brown has told us the only way in which he could admit the phrases, which are charged as teaching error (though he tells us he never employed them) so as to convey, or to be capable of conveying, a sound sense, is the following, viz. that Christ endured evils to which all men are liable, and on this ground deliverance from these evils is offered to all:—so far he was the substitute of all men. But in the strict and proper sense of the term substitute, in the sense at any rate in which it will be understood by our people, one who became answerable in their room, so as necessarily to free them from their responsibilities, he was the substitute of the elect only. But why force upon a man one form of expressing a doctrine which he tells us he thinks

may be much better expressed in other language, and then putting on such a form of expression a meaning which he never intended it to convey, charge him with holding and teaching error?"\*

Four motions to dispose of this last count were brought forward and put to the vote.

The first was by the Rev. Robert Paterson,—  
“That the fifth count in the libel, charging Dr Brown with ‘effectually subverting and rendering void the great cardinal doctrine of our Lord’s substitution in the room of his people’—a doctrine firmly held by this Church—is entirely unfounded.”

The second was made by the Rev. John Clapperton,—“That the Synod find that the fifth article in the major proposition of the libel, viz. ‘That Christ in dying was not the substitute of his people alone, but was the substitute also of others, and, in that capacity, bore the punishment due to the sins of others,’ is a doctrine false and unsound, as charged; and find that Dr Brown disclaims the doctrine of ‘double substitution’ in the ordinary sense, but uses language on this subject which is inconsistent with the received doctrine of this church.”

The third was made by Mr Alexander, elder,—  
“That the Synod find the fifth count of the libel not founded on fact, but on inferences most unwarrantably drawn from the writings referred to, and do with the greatest satisfaction hereby free and relieve Dr Brown from all the charges brought against him in said fifth count of this libel.”

The fourth was made by the Rev. John Law, Dunfermline,—“That the Synod find that from the

\* Report of Proceedings.

explanations given at the time the expressions founded on were employed, no error appears to have been held by Dr Brown; but farther, that the expression, 'that Christ in dying was the substitute of all men,' by whomsoever it may be employed, is unhappy, and ought not to be employed. And Dr Brown having intimated that he does not use, and has no intention of using this expression, the Synod express their approbation of this, and recommend to all ministers and preachers to follow this example."

The above motions were put to the vote, when there voted for the first, 139; for the second, 29; for the third, 15; for the fourth, 21. The first motion having the majority of all the voters was accordingly preferred.

The Court having gone over the whole five counts in the libel, and having pronounced judgment upon each, proceeded to a final deliverance, which was given in these terms, and unanimously adopted:—"The Synod, on a review of its deliberations and decisions during this and the last six sederunts, finds, that all the charges made against Dr Brown have been disposed of, being severally declared to be unfounded. Finds that there exists no ground even for suspicion that he holds, or has ever held, any opinion on the points under review inconsistent with the Word of God, or the subordinate Standards of this Church. The Synod therefore dismisses the libel; and while it sincerely sympathises with Dr Brown in the unpleasant and painful circumstances in which he has been placed, it renews the expression of confidence in him given at last Meeting,\* and entertains

\* Synod of May 1845.

the hope that the issue of this cause has been such as will, by the blessing of God, restore peace and confidence throughout the Church, and terminate the unhappy controversy which has so long agitated it."

It now only remained to intimate this final and formal dismissal of the libel to the several parties. The Moderator calling upon Dr Brown, in the first place, addressed him in these terms :—" Dr Brown, I have the highest satisfaction in intimating to you, that the Synod, after a patient and temperate investigation of the several counts of the libel which they have now had under their consideration, have come to a decision on each of them, finding them unfounded; and also to a general conclusion on the whole libel, acquitting you from the whole charges preferred against you in it, and dismissing it accordingly. The trial through which you have passed has been one peculiarly painful. It has been a matter deeply painful to your brethren of this Synod; how much more must it have been to yourself! You have the warmest sympathy of this Synod. In proportion to the painfulness of this trial must be the gratification flowing from its happy result. And if such a feeling of satisfaction, and joy, and gratitude has pervaded this Court, what must be the feeling of gratification and thanksgiving in your own bosom! May you be long spared to be an honour to that religious body of which you are so distinguished a member, and an instrument of eminent usefulness in the general cause of religion."

Dr Brown then rose and said,—“ Moderator, I retire from your bar, at which, for these four days,



I have appeared as a panel, with mingled emotions—with deep regret that I should have been the occasion—in the inmost consciousness of my mind I feel, the unintentional, the most unwilling, the innocent occasion—of so much trouble to this Court—with entire satisfaction with the sentence to which, after so much patient investigation, they have come—with humble gratitude to God for relieving me from imputations so injurious to my usefulness, and so painful to my feelings—and with sincere thankfulness to this Court as the instruments of His goodness. For the expression of their sympathy, and for this renewed assurance of their confidence, I return my heartfelt thanks. I trust, Sir, that that confidence will not be found misplaced. I hope that, during the few remaining years that may be assigned me (few they must be at most), I shall be enabled, with increased diligence and circumspection, to discharge the duties of the highly responsible station in which you have placed me, and that I shall be permitted to pursue and end my course in peace.”

These remarks of Dr Brown were delivered with great solemnity and effect.

The Moderator now intimated the decision to the libellers. Dr Hay having left the Court, Dr Marshall was called upon, to whom the Moderator spoke as follows :—“ Dr Marshall, the Synod, after a calm and patient examination of the various charges preferred by you in this libel, have come to a decision, acquitting Dr Brown on them all. I trust that, after the patient and temperate investigation to which you have listened, in which the most perfect freedom of discussion on all sides has been allowed, the decision

of your own mind has been in accordance with the unanimous decision of this Court; or, if any hesitation remain, that candid and prayerful reflection will at length lead you to join with them in giving thanks for the issue to which this affair has been brought. And let me express my hope, that this painful matter will afford to yourself, and to all of us, a lesson of forbearance and candour as to the conduct and words of one another; and that before we proceed to impeach the one or the other, we will in all cases make sure that we do it after the most patient and candid inquiry, and on the clearest evidence."

Dr Marshall, then addressing the Moderator, said, evidently labouring under strong emotion,—“ I have done what I felt to be my duty in the circumstances in which I am placed,—a most painful duty,—an overwhelming duty,—a duty which I performed with a most afflicted heart, with deep anguish and tribulation of spirit. I felt that I was called upon to undertake this duty in Providence. It was laid upon me by you, whom I regarded as his instruments,—I felt it was laid upon me by the great Lord, and I have humbly endeavoured to perform it in obedience to him. I hope good will result from it. I have formed this anticipation from what has come under my notice just now. I offer no opinion on the finding of this Court. Perhaps it will be prudent in me to say nothing, yet I strongly felt that I was entitled to say that the case was not proceeded in regularly, nor brought to a regular issue. Your own form of procedure required, and, in my opinion, justice required, that you should

first have proceeded to consider the relevancy of the libel,—the relevancy, count by count,—ere you came to consider the probation. I would have been entirely satisfied if you had proved the whole, or even a part relevant; and with respect to the probation, there is no man here, there is no man in this kingdom would have rejoiced more to have seen Dr Brown completely exculpated than I would. I have been taken at present somewhat by surprise, and am not prepared to speak; but I wish not to be understood that I have intimated my dissatisfaction with the finding of this Court."

The decision having been intimated to the several parties, the Synod, grateful for so peaceful and happy a termination to the proceedings, united in prayer and thanksgiving. Dr Kidston, the oldest member of the Court, led the devotions, while the members of Synod, standing up together, sang the 133d Psalm. It was felt to be "a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." Often on previous occasions, had the members of Synod "to hang their harps upon the willows;" but now "a new song was put into their mouths, even praise unto our God, many shall see it, and fear, and trust in the Lord."

## CHAPTER XI.

Unity of sentiment in the Secession Church, on the subject of the Atonement, from its Origin to the Present Time.

IN reviewing the history of the Atonement Controversy, as narrated in the preceding chapters, one cannot fail to perceive, that substantial unity of sentiment has prevailed to a remarkable extent within the pale of the Secession.

As to the special design of the atonement, the Secession, from its commencement, has given but one sound upon this subject, and that not an uncertain one. Nothing can be more definite and precise than the language employed in its official documents, to intimate that Christ stood in special relations to his chosen, and laid down his life to secure their salvation. The Secession has also uniformly maintained that the atonement wears a gracious aspect to mankind-sinners at large. This aspect is chiefly insisted on, in connexion with what has been termed the Administration of the Covenant of Grace. We shall give two extracts under this head,—the one from Boston of Ettrick, and the other from Brown of Haddington.

In his work on the Covenant of Grace, Boston brings out, very distinctly, the precise aspect in which he held the special reference; at the same time, in

speaking on the Administration of the Covenant, he employs the most decided terms to intimate its universal extent.

“The object” (says Boston, page 196) “of the Administration of the Covenant is sinners of mankind indefinitely; that is to say, Christ is empowered, by commission from his Father, to administer the covenant of grace to any of all mankind, the sinners of the family of Adam, without exception. He is authorised to receive them into the covenant, and to confer on them all the benefits thereof to their eternal salvation, according to the settled order of the covenant. The election of particular persons is a secret not to be discovered in the administration of the covenant, according to the established order thereof, till such time as the sinner have received the covenant, by coming personally into it. And the extent of the administration is not founded on election, but on the sufficiency of Christ’s obedience and death for the salvation of all. Neither is it regulated thereby, but by the fulness of power in heaven and earth given to Jesus Christ, as a reward of his becoming obedient even unto death.

“For confirming of this truth, let the following things be considered:—1st, The grant which the Father hath made of Christ crucified, as his ordinance for the salvation of lost sinners of mankind. In the case of the Israelites in the wilderness, bitten by fiery serpents, God instituted an ordinance for their cure, viz. a brazen serpent lifted up on a pole, and made a grant thereof to whosoever would use it for that purpose, by looking to it. Nobody whosoever that needed healing was excepted. The grant

was conceived in the most ample terms. 'It shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live.' So, all mankind being bitten by the old serpent the devil, and sin as his deadly poison left in them, God hath appointed Jesus Christ the ordinance of heaven for their salvation. There is a word of divine appointment passed upon a crucified Christ, making and constituting him the ordinance of God for the salvation of sinners. And God hath made a grant of him as such, to whosoever of Adam's lost race will make use of him for that purpose, by believing on him, in the which grant none of the world of mankind is excepted. All this is clear from John iii. 14, 15, 16, 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Now, the administration of the covenant being settled, in pursuance of this grant therein made, for a reward of the Mediator's obedience, the object of the former can be no less extensive than that of the latter. 2dly, The Mediator's commission for the administration is conceived in the most ample terms, and he is clothed with the most ample powers with relation to that business. It carries his administering the covenant not only to the meek, the poor, the broken-hearted, but to the captives, blind, bruised, prisoners, bondmen and broken-men, who have sold their inheritance and themselves, and can have no hope of relief but by a jubilee (Luke iv. 18, 19; Isaiah lxi. 1, 2).

What sort of sinners of mankind can one imagine that will not fall in under some of these denominations? Christ is indeed given for a covenant of people, not of this or that people, but of people indefinitely. 'All power is given to him in heaven and in earth.' So, there are none on earth excepted from his administering the covenant to them. He is empowered to save the guilty, law-condemned world, by administering it to them, 'for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.' For as much as he is the ordinance of God for taking away the sin of the world, though many to whom he offers the covenant do refuse it, and so are not saved eventually. Accordingly, from this fulness of power, he issues forth the general offer of the gospel, wherein all, without exception, are declared welcome to come and suck of the full breasts of the divine consolations in the covenant. *All things are delivered to me of my Father. Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations. Preach the gospel to every creature.* 3dly, He executes his commission in an unhampered manner, administering the covenant to any sinner of mankind: 'Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.' The object of his administration is not this or that party of mankind, under this or the other denomination, but men—any men, sons of men indefinitely. So the gospel in which he administers the covenant is good tidings to all people, a feast made unto all people, though many, not relishing the tidings, never taste of the feast. Accordingly,

he commissionates his apostles for that effect in terms than which none can imagine more extensive: *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.* The Jews called man the creature, as being God's creature, by way of eminency. So by every creature is meant every man. There are in the world some men, who, by reason of their monstrous wickedness, are like devils; there are other men, who, by reason of their savageness, seem to differ but little from brutes; but our Lord saith here, in effect, 'Be what they will, if ye can but know them to be men, ask no questions about them on this head, what sort of men they are. Being men, preach the gospel unto them—offer them the covenant; and, if they receive it, give them the seals thereof. My Father made them; I'll save them.'

4thly, If we inquire who they are to whom Christ stands related as a Saviour, or whose Saviour he is according to the Scriptures, we find that, considered as an actual Saviour, saving actually, and eventually, he is, indeed, only the Saviour of the body (Eph. v. 23). But, considered as an official Saviour, a Saviour by office, he is the Saviour of the world (1 John iv. 14; John iv. 42). Thus, one having a commission to be the physician of a society, stands related to every man of them as his physician. Howbeit, he is not actually a healer to any of them but such as employ him. Though some of that society should not employ him at all, but, on every occasion, call another physician, yet he is still their physician by office. Though they should die of their disease, being averse from calling him, yet still it is true that he was their physician, they might have called



him, and had his remedies, and it was purely their own fault that they were not healed by him. Even so our Lord Jesus Christ hath heaven's patent constituting him the Saviour of the world. By the authority of his Father he is invested with that office; and, wheresoever the gospel comes, his patent for that effect is intimated, 'and we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.' Wherefore none of us shall perish for want of a Saviour. Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, he is your Saviour, and my Saviour, be our case what it will; and God, in and by him, 'is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.' Hence, Christ's salvation is the 'common salvation.' And the gospel 'is the grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men.' Christ, then, stands related as a Saviour to the world of mankind—he is their Saviour—and he is so related to every one of them as sinners, lost sinners of that society: 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.' Let no man say, 'Alas! I have nothing to do with Christ, or he with me, for I'm a sinner, a lost sinner.' Nay, upon that very ground there is a relation between him and you. Since you are a sinner of mankind, Christ is your Saviour; for he is by office, Saviour of the family whereof you are a branch. If you will employ another than him, or pine away in your disease rather than put yourself in his hand, ye do it upon your peril. But, know assuredly, that you have a Saviour of your own, chosen of God for you, whether you employ him or not. He is, by his Father's appointment, the physi-

cian of souls. Ye are the sick, and the less sensible ye are, the more dangerously sick. There is a valuable relation, then, betwixt Christ and you as such. He is the great burden-bearer that gives rest to them that 'labour' and are 'heavy laden.' Ye labour, spending your 'labour for that which satisfieth not,' and are laden with iniquity, even heavy laden, and nothing the less so that you are not duly sensible thereof. There is a relation, then, betwixt Christ and you on that very score. Now, if Christ stands related to the world of mankind-sinners, as their Saviour, then they are the objects of his administration of the covenant."

"The Covenant of Grace" (says Brown of Haddington, page 273 of his *Compendious View of Natural and Revealed Religion*) "is in many things administered indefinitely to men in general, without any consideration of them either as elect or as reprobates. (1.) God's grant of Christ, as his ordinance for salvation to man, is general and unlimited, John iii. 14-17, with Num. xxi. 8. (2.) Christ's commission from his Father for administering this covenant is general and unlimited, Isaiah lxi. 1-3, and xlix. 1-9; Matt. xi. 27, and xxviii. 18; John iii. 35, and xvii. 2. (3.) Christ executes his commission respecting sinful men, in the most general and unlimited manner, Prov. i. 22, and viii. 4, and ix. 4, 5; Isa. xlv. 22, and lv. 1-7; Matt. xi. 28, and xxii. 4, 5, and xxviii. 19; Mark vi. 15, 16; Luke xiv. 23; Rev. xxii. 16. (4.) Though Christ effectually save none but his elect, Eph. v. 23, he is, by divine appointment, grant, and office, *the Saviour of the world*, fit for all sinful men, and to whom they

are all warranted by God to apply for salvation, John iv. 42; 1 John iv. 14. His salvation is a *common salvation*, Jude 3, and his gospel is grace which *bringeth salvation*, in offer, to *all men* that hear it, Tit. ii. 11; 1 Tim. i. 15. (5.) If Christ's administration of the new covenant were not thus general and indefinite, some men would have no more warrant to hear the gospel, or believe in, and receive him, for their salvation, than devils have, contrary to Mark xvi. 15, 16; John vii. 37, 38, and vi. 37; Rev. xxii. 17; Prov. i. 22, and viii. 4, and ix. 4, 5; Isa. lv. 1-7, and xlv. 22, and xlvi. 12, 13. Nor could they be condemned for their unbelief, according to John iii. 18, 36; Mark xvi. 16; Rev. xxi. 8; Prov. viii. 36. The foundation of God's general grant of Christ in the gospel, as his ordinance to men for their salvation, and of his general administration of the covenant, is (1) Christ's fulfilment of the condition of the covenant; being infinitely valuable in itself, is, intrinsically considered, a sufficient ransom for all men, Acts xx. 28, and iii. 15; 1 Cor. ii. 8; 2 Cor. v. 21; Phil. ii. 6-8. (2) Being fulfilled in a human nature equally related or similar to all men, it is equally answerable to all their needs. (3) All men, indefinitely considered, have in them the moral characters of those for whom Christ died, being *unjust, ungodly, sinners, enemies to God, &c.*, 2 Pet. iii. 18; Rom. v. 6-10, and the characters with which the absolute promises of the covenant directly correspond, being *stout-hearted and far from righteousness, godless, sinful, lost, self-destroyed, &c.*, Isa. xlvi. 12, 13; Heb. viii. 10-12; Luke xix. 10; Hos. xiii. 9; Jer. lii. 1, 2."

These extracts exhibit the doctrine of the Secession Church on the atonement, as connected with the administration of the covenant; and in this connexion no difference of sentiment has ever prevailed among its members. The disputes that have existed, have been confined to a difference of conception as to the way in which to reconcile the administration with the original transactions of the covenant.

“By orthodox divines,” (says the late Dr Balmer, in page 38 of the “Statements,”) “the covenant of grace, while it is most frequently contemplated in reference to the elect exclusively, is viewed occasionally as having also a general reference. In both aspects it is exhibited in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and in the Larger Catechism; for, in the former of these documents, it is said that ‘in the Covenant of Grace, God freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life, his holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe.’ In the latter document it is said that ‘in the second covenant God freely provideth and offereth to sinners a mediator and life and salvation by him; and that he giveth his Holy Spirit to all his elect,’ &c. Here, then, a distinction is made between those for whom salvation is provided, and to whom it is offered, and those to whom it is actually applied; and here it is plainly intimated that, in the covenant of grace, Christ and his salvation are offered to sinners indiscriminately. I should be glad, then, to be informed whether the administration of the covenant, which embodies this universal offer,

is in exact accordance with its stipulations, as fixed before the foundation of the world; and, if so, whether it does not in some sense comprehend sinners generally or universally. And if the blessed Jesus died for all in the sense already so often explained, I should be glad to know where can be the impropriety of saying that 'he covenanted to die for all;' for surely it will not be denied that 'what he did in the fulness of time was only the development of what he had purposed and engaged to do before the world was.'

These remarks bring before us the only question on which there has been, in the Secession, any variation of opinion, or, rather, of conception. Some would explain the matter thus,—Christ, in the transactions of the covenant, stipulated for the elect only, the expiation of their guilt and the ransom of their souls, being the exclusive subject of covenant stipulations; nevertheless, from the perfection and infinite sufficiency of his work, the door of mercy has been set open to all, so that God in the proclamation of the gospel, holds out salvation to the acceptance of every child of Adam. Others, again, would explain the matter thus,—as whatever God does, he purposed to do, so the exhibition in the gospel of Christ and his salvation to the acceptance of all, must have entered into God's plan of mercy as formed from eternity. Whatever, therefore, Christ did and suffered, he must have done and suffered, with a view not merely to the salvation of his chosen, but to all the ends which have been accomplished by his propitiation, with the view at once (in subordination to the divine glory) of opening the door of mercy

to all, and securing the salvation of the elect. Whichever of these modes of explanation be adopted, both of them, it is plain, involve the same great substantial truths, which enter into the sum and substance of the gospel. Some, indeed, who hold by the general reference, as connected, not with the original transactions, but with the administration of the covenant, conceive that the latter mode of viewing the subject affects materially the nature of the atonement, by disconnecting it from salvation in the case of many, for whom, according to the stipulations of the covenant, the atonement was in one sense made,—a severance, they contend, that ought not to be admitted even in conception. But adopt the other mode of viewing the subject, and it amounts to precisely the same thing. Salvation is offered to all, and offered to all in connexion with the atonement; yet, in the case of multitudes to whom it is so offered, it is never bestowed. It does not remove the difficulty to say, true, salvation is offered to many who never obtain it; but then, the atonement, as the result shows, was never in any sense made for them; so far from removing the difficulty, in the estimation of not a few, this only augments it, because it disconnects salvation from the atonement, not only by offering salvation to men who will never enjoy it, but by offering it on the ground of an atonement which has no relation to them whatever. To offer salvation to those for whom the atonement was in no sense made, is it not like calling on men to take what does not belong to them? True, God has given to every creature this right of appropriation. But this just brings us back to the question,—has not God given

the right, because Christ so died for all, according to the stipulations of the covenant, as that all have a common interest in his salvation, and in that death by which the common salvation has been procured?

But, as has been remarked, a difference of conception as to the mode of explaining truths, or the relations of truths, does not imply a difference of sentiment as to the facts, or truths themselves; and hence, upon the general and special aspects of the atonement, the Secession Church may be described as having been always substantially at one, at least, as much at one as any body of men can possibly be, who are capable of exercising their thoughts, on the more difficult and abstruse departments of theological inquiry.

Nor is it to be overlooked that this difference of conception, as to the relation of truths, existed amongst the Marrow-men. Their leader, Hog of Carnock, in opposing Principal Hadow, says, "It is plain our Lord expressly founds the offers of reconciliation upon this ground, namely, *He (God the Father) hath made him (the Lord Jesus) who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* The connexion is plainly divine. *We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* Herein the exhortation and obtestation are directed unto all these, to whom the gospel is preached, and the ground which the Spirit of God layeth, for it is, *He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, &c.* I tremble in the least to recede from the words, in a matter so much controverted, but shall only offer a few remarks to the judicious and godly reader,

may it be with fear and caution, and without going into the camp of the Universalists."\* After remarking that the general offer of the gospel implies the completeness of the remedy, and after commenting on its fulness and sufficiency, Mr Hog deduces the inference, "that so much of the extent of Christ's death must be acknowledged, as leaveth no room to one or other, yea, to the very worst of sinners, for framing any valid objection against the invitation given him to believe, or to come to Christ." In another publication against the same antagonist, who, in attacking the Universal Deed of Gift, complained of Mr Hog as too reserved on the question of the extent of Christ's death, Mr Hog after premising that he was entirely of the sentiments of the Westminster divines upon that head, proceeds to intimate that he could perceive no true foundation for the universal offer of the gospel, "distinct from a suitable extent of Christ's death and purchase;"† and in referring to the reproof our Lord gave unto the rejecters of the gospel,—*Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life*, which imported their warrant to come, with the assurance, that if they did so, they should obtain the blessing; Mr Hog puts the question, "what foundation for this assurance can be assigned distinct from Christ's death, or can encouragements towards salvation be deduced from any other considerations of the alone Saviour, than as he is crucified? Will it not then follow from hence, that he died and was crucified for all to whom the gospel

\* Conference between Epaphroditus and Epaphras.

† Remarks on the Review of Conference, &c.



is preached ; I mean only in so far as was necessary to warrant and bear them out in their obligation to accept a crucified Saviour ; or, shall we say that the Lord obligeth them to accept a Saviour, as crucified, who yet in no sense, whatsoever, was crucified for them ? ” \*

Thus the same question proposed by Dr Balmer was started by Mr Hog, without, however, creating any contention among the Marrow-men. Their unanimity on the universal Deed of Gift, and their firm belief in the special design of Christ's death, constituted the common ground on which they acted.

As to the propriety of employing the term atonement in connexion with the general reference of the death of Christ, some conceive that, as the term is one which may be used to signify simply satisfaction, enabling God, in consistency with law and justice, to dispense to sinners the blessings of his grace, it may be employed with the utmost propriety. Others, again, admit the death of Christ to be the basis upon which pardon and every spiritual blessing may be imparted to any and every sinner of our race ; but they would confine the term atonement to the special reference, conceiving that it implies, or will be understood to imply, satisfaction, not merely warranting God to forgive, but obliging him to do so. Here the dispute respects the employment of a word ; and is, moreover, a difference in speculation, not in practice ; for on account of the ambiguity of the term, the Secession discountenances its use, in connexion with the general reference.

\* Appendix F.

The same may be said of the term substitution. From recent discussions, some, it appears, have no objections to say, that in the same sense in which Christ died for all, opening for all a door of mercy, and removing legal obstructions out of the way of their salvation ; that in the same sense, or to the same extent, Christ undertook for all, or was the substitute of all. But this is an extension of the term for which they do not contend, not only because the truth involved in the general reference may be taught without it, but because its employment might seem to encroach upon those specialities of covenant arrangements, with which orthodox divines have been in the habit of associating this term, specialities viewed in connexion with which Christ must be regarded as the substitute of the elect only, —a doctrine which no one in the Secession attempts to set aside.

Scrupulously, however, maintaining these specialities, in virtue of which the salvation of the elect is secured, the Secession regards and has ever regarded the general reference of the death of Christ, as a great scriptural truth, to vindicate which was one of the grand objects of the Marrow-men in their contendings with the General Assembly. Nor need the charge of Arminianism alarm the ministers of a church, the founders of which had to encounter, along with Hog and Boston, the same groundless calumny.

“ For the alleged Arminianism,” says Hog, “ in reviewing Principal Hadow’s ‘ Snake in the Grass,’ its ill concluded from the universality of expression. At this rate the Scriptures might be concluded to be

downright Arminian, for we want not store of Universalisms there, too many to be mentioned in this manner. *As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.* Vindicate the sacred text from the Arminian gloss, and with the same labour, you clear the Marrow." \*

The next chapter will show, how able and distinguished men of other countries and churches have thought and written upon this subject.

\* Letter to a Gentleman containing a detection of the errors, &c., in The "Snake in the Grass."

## CHAPTER XII.

Sentiments respecting the Atonement by Usher, Davenant, Amyraud, and Baxter.

OUR reason for selecting Usher from a host of others is, that he was one of the most learned and distinguished men of his day, and, as Primate of Ireland, had a principal hand in drawing up the "Articles of Religion agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops, and the rest of the Clergy of Ireland, in the Convocation holden at Dublin in the year of our Lord 1615, for the avoiding of Diversities of Opinions, and the establishing of Consent touching True Religion."\* These articles, moreover, are strictly Calvinistic, and express, on the doctrine of the divine decrees, the same sentiments, in nearly the same words, that are to be found in the Westminster Confession of Faith. This distinguished man, a little before the meeting of the Synod of Dort, which took place in 1618, was requested by a friend to give him his sentiments respecting the extent of the atonement. This he accordingly did, and as the "judgment" of the Archbishop is not very long, we quote it without abridgment:—

"The all-sufficient satisfaction of Christ, made

\* Harmony of Protestant Confessions.

for the sins of the whole world. The true intent and extent is *lubricus locus*, to be handled, and hath and doth now much trouble the Church. This question hath been moved *sub iisdem terminis quibus nunc*, and hath received contrary resolutions. The reason is, that in the two extremities of opinions held in this matter, there is somewhat true and somewhat false. The one extremity extends the benefit of Christ's satisfaction too far, as if hereby God for his part were actually reconciled to all mankind, and did really discharge every man from all his sins; and that the reason why all men do not reap the fruit of this benefit, is the want of that faith whereby they ought to have believed that God in this sort did love them: whence it would follow, that God should forgive a man his sins and justify him before he believed, whereas the elect themselves, before their effectual vocation, are said to be *without Christ and without hope, and to be utter strangers from the covenants of promise*, Eph. ii. 12.

“ The other extremity contracts the riches of Christ's satisfaction into too narrow a room; as if none had any kind of interest therein but such as were elected before the foundation of the world, howsoever by the gospel every one be charged to receive the same; whereby it would follow, that a man should be bound in conscience to believe that which is untrue, and charged to take that wherewith he hath nothing to do.

“ Both extremities, then, drawing with them unavoidable absurdities. The Word of God (by hearing whereof faith is begotten, Eph. i. 13), must be sought unto by a middle course to avoid these extremities.

“ For finding out this middle course we must, in the matter of our redemption, carefully put a distinction betwixt the satisfaction of Christ absolutely considered, and the application thereof to every one in particular. The former was once done for all; the other is still in doing. The former brings with it sufficiency abundant to discharge the whole debt; the other adds to it efficacy. The satisfaction of Christ only makes the sins of mankind fit for pardon, which, without it, could not well be,—the injury done to God’s majesty being so great that it could not stand with his honour to put it up without amends made. The particular application makes the sins of those to whom that mercy is vouchsafed to be actually pardoned; for as all sins are mortal, in regard of the stipend due thereunto by the law, but all do not actually bring forth death, because the gracious promises of the gospel stayeth the execution; even so all the sins of mankind are become venial, in respect of the price paid by Christ to his Father (so far, that in showing mercy upon all, if so it were his pleasure, his justice should be no loser); but all do not obtain actual remission, because most offenders do not take out, nor plead their pardon as they ought to do. If Christ had not assumed our nature, and therein made satisfaction for the injury offered to the Divine Majesty, God would not have come unto a treaty of peace with us more than with the fallen angels, whose nature the Son did not assume; but this way being made, God holds out unto us the golden sceptre of his Word, and thereby not only signifieth his pleasure of admitting us into his presence, and accepting of our submission, which

is a wonderful grace, but also sends an embassy unto us, and entreats us that we would be reconciled unto him, 2 Cor. v. 20.

“Hence, we infer against the first extremity, that by the virtue of this blessed oblation, God is made placable unto our nature (which he never will be unto the *angelical nature* offending), but not actually appeased with any, until he hath received his Son, and put on the Lord Jesus. As also against the latter extremity that all men may be truly said to have interest in the merits of Christ, as in a Common, though all do not enjoy the benefit thereof; because they have no *will* to take it.

“The well-spring of life is set open unto all (Rev. xxii. 17), *Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*; but many have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Faith is the vessel whereby we draw all virtue from Christ; and the apostle tells us, that faith is not of all (2 Thess. iii. 2). Now, the means of getting this faith, is the *hearing of the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation* (Eph. i. 13), which ministreth this general ground for every one to build his faith upon.

“Syllogism. What Christ hath prepared for thee, and the gospel offereth unto thee, that oughtest thou with all thankfulness to accept, and apply to the comfort of thy own soul.

“But Christ by his death and obedience hath provided a sufficient remedy for the taking away of all thy sins, and the gospel offereth the same unto thee. Therefore, thou oughtest to accept, and apply the same to the comfort of thine own soul.

“Now, this gospel of salvation many do not hear

at all, being destitute of the ministry of the word; and many hearing do not believe, or lightly regard it; and many that do believe the truth thereof, are so wedded to their sins, that they have no desire to be divorced from them, and, therefore, they refuse to accept the gracious offer that is made unto them. And yet, notwithstanding this refusal on their part, we may truly say, that good things were provided for them on Christ's part, and a rich *price was put into the hands of a fool, howsoever he had no heart to use it* (Prov. xvii. 16).

"Our blessed Saviour, by that which he hath performed on his part, hath procured a jubilee for the sons of Adam, and his gospel is his trumpet, whereby he doth proclaim *liberty to the captives, and preacheth the acceptable year of the Lord* (Luke iv. 18, 19).

"If for all this some are so well pleased with their captivity that they desire no deliverance, that derogates nothing from the generality of the freedom annexed to that year. If one say to *sin* his old master (Lev. xxv. 24; Exodus xxi. 5; Deut. xv. 26), *I love thee and will not go out free*, he shall be bored for a slave, and serve for ever. But that slavish disposition of his maketh the extent of the privilege of that year not a whit the straiter, because he was included within the general grant, as well as others; howsoever, he was not disposed to take the benefit of it. The kingdom of heaven is like to a certain king, that made a marriage of his son, and sent his servants to those that were bidden to the wedding, with this message, *Behold I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattlings are killed, and all*



*things are ready ; come to the marriage (verse 4). If we look to the event, They that were bidden made light of their entertainment, and went their ways ; one to his farm, and another to his merchandise (verse 5) ; but that neglect of theirs doth not falsify the word of the king (verse 4), namely, that the dinner was prepared, and these unworthy guests were invited thereunto. For what if some did not believe, shall their unbelief disannul the faith, and truth of God ? (Rom. iii. 3, 4), God forbid ; yea, let God be true, and every man a liar, as it is written, that thou mayest be justified in thy sayings, and overcome when thou judgest. Let not the house of Israel say the way of the Lord is unequal. For when he cometh to judge them, the inequality will be found on their side, and not on his. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal, and your ways unequal saith the Lord (Ezek. xviii. 29, 30). The Lord is right in all his ways, and holy in all his works. All the ways of our God are mercy and truth ; when we were in our sins, it was of infinite mercy that any way or remedy should be prepared for our recovery. And when the remedy is prepared, we are never the nearer, except he be pleased of his free mercy to apply the same to us, that so the whole praise of our redemption, from the beginning to the end thereof, may entirely be attributed to the riches of his grace, and nothing left to sinful flesh wherein it may rejoice.*

“ The freeing of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon was a type of that great deliverance which the Son of God hath wrought for us.

“ Cyrus, king of Persia, who was *Christus Domini* (and herein but a shadow of *Christus Dominus*, the

author of our redemption), published his proclamation in this manner:—*Who is amongst you of all his people, the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up* (2 Chr. xxxvi. 23, and Ezra i. 3). Now, it is true they alone did follow this calling whose spirit God had raised to go up (Ezra i. 5). But could they that remained still in Babylon justly plead that the king's grant was not large enough, or that they were excluded from going up by any clause contained therein? The matter of our redemption purchased by our Saviour Christ lyeth open to *all*,—all are invited to it,—none that hath a mind to accept of it is excluded from it. *The beautiful feet of those that preach the gospel of peace, do bring glad tidings of good things to every house where they tread.* The first part of their message being this, peace to this house (Rom. x. 15; Luke x. 5; xvii.). But unless God be pleased out of his abundant mercy to *guide our feet into the way of peace*, the rebellion of our nature is such, that we run headlong to the *ways of destruction and misery* (Rom. iii. 16), and the *ways of peace do we not know*. They have not all obeyed the gospel, Rom. x. 16. All are not apt to entertain this message of peace; and therefore, though God's ambassadors make a true tender of it to all unto whom they are sent, yet *their peace only resteth on the sons of peace*; but if it meet with such as will not listen to the motion of it, *their peace doth again return unto themselves*, Luke x. 6. The proclamation of the gospel runneth thus:—Rev. xxii. 17, *Let him that is athirst come*, for him this grace is specially provided, because none but he will take the pains to come. But lest we should think this would abridge the

largeness of the offer, a *quicumque vult* is immediately added, and *whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*: yet withal, this must be yielded for a certain truth, that it is God who must work in us, *to will and to do of his good pleasure*; and though the call be never so loud and large, yet none can *come except the Father draw him* (John vi. 44); for the universality of the satisfaction derogates nothing from the necessity of the special grace in the application; neither doth the speciality of the one any ways abridge the generality of the other. Indeed, Christ our Saviour saith, John xvii. 6, *I pray not for the world, but for them that thou hast given me*: but the consequence hereby referred may well be excepted against,—namely, he *prayed* not for the world, therefore he *paid* not for the world; because the latter is an act of his satisfaction, the former of his intercession, which being divers parts of his priesthood, are distinguishable one from another by sundry differences. This his satisfaction doth properly give contentment to God's justice, in such sort as formerly hath been declared: his intercession doth solicit God's mercy. The first contains the preparation of the remedy necessary for man's salvation; the second brings with it an application of the same; and, consequently, the one may well appertain to the common nature, which the Son assumed, when the other is a special privilege vouchsafed to such particular persons only as *the Father hath given him*; and therefore we may safely conclude, out of all these premises, that the Lamb of God offering himself a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, intended, by giving sufficient satisfac-

tion to God's justice, to make the nature of man, which he assumed, a fit subject for mercy, and to prepare a medicine for the sins of the whole world, which should be denied to none that intended to take the benefit of it. Howsoever, he intended not by applying this all-sufficient remedy unto every person in particular, to make it effectual unto the salvation of all, or to procure thereby actual pardon for the sins of the whole world. So in one respect he may be said to have died for all, and, in another respect, not to have died for all ; yet, so as in respect of his mercy he may be counted a kind of universal cause of the restoring of our nature, as Adam was of the depraving of it ; for, as far as I can discern, he rightly hits the nail on the head that determineth the point in this manner.”\*

These are the sentiments of Archbishop Usher. Having been communicated in a letter to a friend, several copies were circulated, and animadversions made upon it. Amongst other things, he was charged with a leaning to Arminianism. In reply to this, the Archbishop makes the following remarks :—

“ The main error of the Arminians, and of the patrons of universal grace, is this—That God offereth unto every man those means that are necessary unto salvation, both sufficiently and effectually, and that it resteth in the free will of every one to receive or reject the same. For the proof thereof they allege, as their predecessors the semi-Pelagians did before them, that received axiom of Christ's dying for all men, which being rightly understood, makes nothing

\* “ The judgment of the late Archbishop of Armagh, &c., on the extent of Christ's death,” &c.

for their purpose. Some of their opposites (subject to oversights as well as others), more forward herein than circumspect, have answered this objection, not by expounding (as was fit), but by flat denying, that famous axiom, affirming peremptorily that Christ died only for the elect, and for others *nullo modo*; whereby they gave the adverse party advantage to drive them unto this extreme absurdity,—namely, that seeing Christ in no wise died for any, but for the elect, and all men were bound to believe that Christ died for themselves, and that upon pain of damnation for the contrary infidelity. Therefore all men were bound to believe that they themselves were elected, although in truth the matter were nothing so :

Non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis  
Tempus eget."

Again he says—

“ My belief is, that the principal end of the Lord's death was, *that he might gather together*, in one, the children of God scattered abroad (John xi. 52); and that for their sakes he did *specially sanctify himself*, that they *also might be sanctified through the truth* (John xvii. 19); and therefore, it may be well concluded, that Christ, in a special manner, died for these; but to infer from hence, that in no manner of respect he died for any others, is but a very weak conclusion, specially the respect by me expressed being so reasonable, that no sober mind advisedly considering thereof can justly make question of it,—namely, that the Lamb of God offering himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world, intended, by giving

satisfaction to God's justice, to make the nature of man, which he assumed, a fit subject for mercy, and to prepare a sovereign medicine that should not only be a sufficient cure for the sins of the whole world, but also should be laid open to all, and denied to none, that indeed do take the benefit thereof; for he is much deceived that thinks a preaching of a bare sufficiency is able to yield sufficient ground of comfort to a distressed soul, without giving a further way to it, and opening a further passage."\*

Such are the views of one who is described by a cotemporary as a man known not only in his own country, but "wheresoever else there is an honour given to piety, or a price set upon learning."

We now pass to Bishop Davenant, who flourished during the same period, and we fix upon him because he was one of the divines of England who attended the Synod of Dort, and because at this Synod he was greatly honoured, by being appointed, along with several others, to the task of composing the "Scriptum Elenchicum," "wherein were to be refuted such errors as had been lately broached in prejudice of the received doctrine."

In his Dissertation on the Death of Christ, Bishop Davenant enters very fully into the subject, treating it with great learning, discrimination, and judgment. Setting aside the question respecting the order of the divine decrees, as a "thorny question which has been tossed about by many, and vexed all who have undertaken to discuss it," he illustrates several propositions, bearing upon the general and special

\* Answer to some exceptions taken against the aforesaid letter.

aspects of the atonement. His first proposition is—

“The death of Christ is represented in Holy Scripture as a universal remedy, by the ordinance of God, and the nature of the thing itself, applicable for salvation to all and every individual of mankind.”

His second proposition is—

“The death of Christ is the universal cause of the salvation of mankind; and Christ himself is acknowledged to have died for all men sufficiently, not by reason of the mere sufficiency or of the intrinsic value, according to which the death of God is a price more than sufficient for redeeming a thousand worlds, but by reason of the evangelical covenant confirmed with the whole human race through the merit of this death, and of the divine ordination depending upon it; according to which, under the possible condition of faith, remission of sins and eternal life is decreed to be set before every mortal man who will believe it, on account of the merits of Christ.”

In this second proposition there are modes of expression liable to be misunderstood. Bishop Davenant explains these in consistency with the Calvinistic system, particularly the clause respecting “the possible condition of faith,” it being his opinion that “faith is the special gift of God.”

His third proposition is—

“The death or passion of Christ, as the universal cause of the salvation of mankind, hath, by the act of its oblation, so far rendered God the Father pacified and reconciled to the human race, that he

can be truly said to be ready to receive into favour any man whatever, as soon as he shall believe in Christ; yet the aforesaid death of Christ does not place any one, at least of adults, in a state of grace, of actual reconciliation, or of salvation, before he believes."

His fourth proposition is—

"The death of Christ being granted to be applicable to all men, on condition of faith, it is consistent with the goodness and justice of God to supply or to deny, either to nations, or to individuals, the means of application, and that according to the good pleasure of his own will, not according to the disparity of human wills."

Having laid down and illustrated these propositions, he proceeds to consider the special aspect of the atonement, in opposition both to the Pelagian and Arminian creeds. His proposition upon this part of the subject is—

"The death of Christ, from the special design of God the Father, who from eternity ordained and accepted that sacrifice, and of Christ who offered it in the fulness of time to God the Father, was destined for some certain persons, whom the Scripture calls the elect, and for them alone, so as to be effectually and infallibly applied to the obtaining of eternal life."

These are the propositions contained in Bishop Davenant's Dissertation, one of the ablest the atonement controversy has produced; and, in summing up the whole matter, the following are the conclusions to which he comes.

"Therefore, let this be the sum and conclusion



of this whole controversy on the death of Christ: that Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man, in confirming the evangelical covenant, according to the tenor of which eternal life is due to every one that believeth, made no division or separation of men, so that we can say that any one is excluded from the benefit of his death, if he should believe. And, in this sense, we contend, in agreement with the Scriptures, the fathers, and solid arguments, that Christ suffered on the cross and died for all men, or for the whole human race. We add, moreover, that this Mediator, when he had determined to lay down his life for sin, had also this special intention, that, by virtue of his merits, he would effectually and infallibly quicken and bring to eternal life, some persons who were specially given to him by the Father. And, in this sense, we contend that Christ laid down his life for the elect alone, or in order to purchase his Church,—that is, that he died for them alone, with the special and certain purpose of effectually regenerating and saving them by the merit of his death. Therefore, although the merit of Christ equally regards all men as to its sufficiency, yet it does not as to its efficacy; which is to be understood, not only on account of the effect produced in one, and not in another, but also on account of the will, with which Christ himself merited, and offered his merits, in a different way for different persons. Now, the first cause and source of this diversity, was the election and will of God, to which the human will of Christ conformed itself; and from hence Suares rightly deduces, *That this merit of Christ is the very cause of spiritual regeneration, and gives it efficacy, and*

*produces its effect, and, at the same time, is the cause why that man is regenerated, on account of whom he specially offered his merit.* For our divines, let that eminently learned man of pious memory, Robert Bishop, of Salisbury, speak. Thus he says—*Although we do not deny that Christ died for all men, yet we believe that he died specially and peculiarly for the Church, nor does the benefit of redemption pertain in an equal degree to all. And from the peculiarity of this benefit, and from the human will, in some degree depends the efficacy of all means, that they are for those only, and for their use, whom Christ redeemed with some peculiar regard to their being elected in him. Nor do they obtain the effect because of being willing, but because God, according to the purpose of his own grace, works in the elect and redeemed to will that to which he chooses them.* Therefore, He who by his death merited eternal life sufficiently for all men, so as that it is to be given to all, according to the evangelical covenant, if they believe, also merited most effectually for some, by the peculiar application of his merits, that they should believe, and that they should receive eternal life from the gratuitous gift of God, through and on account of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the peculiar lot of the elect; of which, may the Father of Mercies make us partakers! To whom, with the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be honour, praise, and glory, now and for ever. Amen.”

Such are the sentiments of one of the four deputies from England, who attended the Synod of Dort, which condemned all the five Arminian points; in which condemnation Bishop Davenant most cordially concurred.

As has been remarked, Bishop Davenant avoided the "thorny question" of the order of the divine decrees, and thus displayed not only good sense, but a complete appreciation of the merits of the controversy, which involves a question not to be determined by abstruse speculations respecting things that more properly belong to God himself—speculations which can form no safe or proper basis for the construction of any theological system.

Amyraud, however, was not quite so cautious. He flourished at the same period as Davenant, and was one of the most eminent of the French Protestant divines, being pastor and Professor of Theology in the church and University of Saumur. In endeavouring to explain the mystery of predestination, he, along with Testard, pastor of the church of Blois, published sentiments which caused the cry of heresy to be raised against them. The consequence was, the two had to appear, in 1637, before one of the national Councils of the Reformed Churches in France, a previous Council having required all the members of the Provincial Synods to swear to the doctrines taught and decided by the Synod of Dort.

Amyraud and Testard being heard, and a long debate having ensued, a committee was appointed to consider the matter, and report. From the report which was returned, the following extracts may be quoted in illustration of the views of Amyraud and his cotemporary Testard :—

"They declared, that Jesus Christ died for all men sufficiently, but for the elect only effectually; and that, consequently, his intention was to die for

all men in respect of the sufficiency of his satisfaction, but for the elect only in respect of its quickening and saving virtue and efficacy; which is to say, that Christ's will was, that the sacrifice of his cross should be of an infinite price and value, and most abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world; yet, nevertheless, the efficacy of his death appertains only unto the elect; so that those who are called by the preaching of the gospel to participate by faith in the effects and fruits of his death, being invited seriously, and God vouchsafing them all external means needful for their coming to him, and showing them in good earnest, and with the greatest sincerity by his word, what would be well pleasing to him; if they should not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but perish in their obstinacy and unbelief, this cometh not from any defect of virtue or sufficiency in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, nor yet for want of summons or serious invitations unto faith or repentance, but only from their own fault. And as for those who do receive the doctrine of the gospel with the obedience of faith, they are, according to the irrevocable promise of God, made partakers of the effectual virtue and fruit of Christ Jesus' death; for this was the most free council and gracious purpose both of God the Father in giving his Son for the salvation of mankind, and of the Lord Jesus Christ in suffering the pains of death, that the efficacy thereof should particularly belong unto all the elect, and to them only, to give them justifying faith, and by it to bring them infallibly unto salvation, and thus effectually to redeem all those, and none other, who were from all eternity,

from among all people, nations, and tongues, chosen unto salvation." \*

As to making "distinct decrees in the council of God, the first of which is to save all men, through Jesus Christ, if they shall believe in him, the second to give faith unto some particular persons," Amyraud, along with Testard, declared, "that they did this upon none other account than of accommodating it unto that manner and order which the spirit of man observeth in his reasonings for the succour of his own infirmity; they otherwise believing, that though they considered this decree as diverse, yet it was formed in God in one and the self-same moment, without any succession of thought or order of priority and posteriority." †

With these explanations, and others which it is not necessary to quote, relating to God's *willing all men to be saved* (from which explanations Amyraud and Howe appear to be at one), the Assembly, to use their own language, "were well satisfied, and honourably dismissed Amyraud and Testard to the exercise of their respective charges." This, however, the Assembly did not do, without one or two cautions for the future; especially that the phrase of "Jesus Christ's dying *equally* for all, should be forborne, because that term *equally* was formerly, and might be so again, an occasion of stumbling unto many."

Complaints against Amyraud did not terminate with the Assembly of 1637. They were renewed in 1645, but with the same results—Amyraud being

\* Quick's Synodicon, Vol. ii. p. 354.

† Ibid., p. 355.

"dismissed with honour to the exercise of his professorship, wherein he was exhorted to employ himself with courage and cheerfulness." \*

These Assemblies, before which Amyraud appeared, strictly prohibited controversial publications on the subject. Amyraud, however, obtained a conditional permission to write in his defence, if attacked by foreign divines "to the blasting of his reputation." Having had occasion to use his pen in this way, Amyraud was found fault with for this; but not having written any thing "till others had first provoked him, by clamouring against his doctrine," the Assembly of 1659 unanimously agreed "that all that was past . . . should be buried in the grave of a deep and holy oblivion," † and that Amyraud should be encouraged to continue to consecrate his rich gifts to the advancement of the glory of God and the edification of the church.

With the sentiments of Usher, Davenant, and Amyraud, the celebrated Richard Baxter may be said, generally speaking, to have agreed. In the article concerning the Extent of Redemption, he gives his assent to what was passed by the Synod of Dort, "without any exception, limitation, or exposition of any word as doubtful and obscure." ‡ With respect to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Shorter Catechism, Baxter makes the following remarks:—

"I do heartily approve of the Shorter Catechism of the Assembly, and of all therein contained; and

\* Quick's Synodicon, Vol. ii. p. 455.

† Ibid, p. 554.

‡ Baxter's Confession of Faith, p. 25.

I take it for the best catechism that ever I yet saw, and the answers continued, for a most excellent sum of the christian faith and doctrine, and a fit test to try the orthodoxness even of teachers themselves."

He passes a similar eulogium upon the Larger Catechism; but takes exception to one or two statements, which he cannot receive without explanation. And in regard to the Confession of Faith, he says, "I have perused oft the Confession of the Assembly, and verily judge it the most excellent for fulness and exactness that I have ever read from any church; and though the truths therein being of several degrees of evidence and necessity, I do not hold them with equal clearness, confidence, or certainty; and though some few points in it are beyond my reach, yet I have observed nothing in it contrary to my judgment, if I may be allowed these expositions following." And from these, expositions we select the first, as bearing on the atonement:—"Chap. iii. § 6, and chap. viii. § 8, which speak against universal redemption, I understand, not of all redemption, and particularly, not of the mere bearing the punishment of man's sins, and satisfying God's justice; but of that special redemption proper to the elect, which was accompanied with an intention of actual application of the saving benefits in time. If I may not be allowed this interpretation, I must herein dissent; and if this Confession was intended for a test to all that should enter into or exercise the ministry, I hope it was never the mind of that Reverend Assembly to have shut out such men as Bishop Usher, Davenant, Hall, Dr Preston, Dr Staughton, Mr William Fenner, Dr Ward, and many more excellent English

divines as ever this church enjoyed, who were all for general redemption, though not for an *equal* general redemption; to say nothing of the divines of France, Breme and Beroline, and other foreigners that go this way.”\*

From these extracts, the reader will easily gather what were Baxter’s sentiments respecting the extent of the atonement;—that it was in one respect universal, and in another particular,—universal, viewed in its bearings upon mankind at large, delivering them, as he expresses it, “from the legal necessity of perishing;” and particular, when contemplated in its relation to the elect. “It is not (says he, in the Preface to the Confession of his Faith) the least wrong that the Pelagians, Jesuits, and Arminians have done to the church, that by making grace universal, further than was just, they have tempted others in way of opposition, to deny that grace of God which is indeed universal, or which is common to more than the elect alone; and by making Christ to have died for all, with an equal intention of saving them, they have occasioned so many to deny that indeed he did die for all. So that had not the notions of an universal sufficiency of Christ’s death, and of an universal offer of him in the gospel, through the great mercy of God, been preserved among us, and had much influence into our popular and practical preaching, we had been drawn very near to a subverting of the very foundation, and should have been too like to them that preach *another gospel*, to the great danger of the souls of our hearers, and the dishonour of our Redeemer.”

\* Baxter’s Confession.



The chief objection against Baxter respects the mode in which he expresses himself, regarding what may be termed the conditional part of the covenant of grace. He freely employs such modes of statement as the following:—"Christ did, by his sufferings, only pay, as it were, that which is a valuable consideration, for the non-execution of the law, as to all that will perform the conditions of the gospel or new law."\* Now, this mode of statement introduced that Baxterianism, as it was called, against which the Fathers of the Secession so strongly protested, the idea of a "new law," and of "performing the conditions of the gospel," being language which encroached, in their estimation, upon the doctrines of free grace. Hence the Marrow-men regarded Baxterianism with great dislike, because of the "legal terms" which it employed "in the explaining of gospel truth," giving Baxterianism currency, with those who opposed Antinomianism on the one hand, and free grace, on the other. We exculpate Baxter from the charge of making void the gospel of the grace of God, or of countenancing those errors which arose; at the same time, we do not hesitate to dissent from the manner in which he too frequently exhibits the department of christian truth, to which we are adverting. The Westminster Confession, indeed, speaks of faith as the *condition* necessary to interest us in Christ; but this is language to be used with explanation; otherwise it is apt to convey a legal, rather than an evangelical doctrine. "The vehemence, however," says Dr Dick, "with which some

\* Baxter on Universal Redemption, page 389.

in our church have opposed the use of the term, while they might have known that nothing improper was meant by it, is altogether unjustifiable. It arose either from ignorance that the term is found in our Standards or from dishonest zeal—which condemns in an antagonist what it tolerates in a friend.”\*

There are other divines of note, whose sentiments on the atonement might have been referred to, but we content ourselves with having adverted to Usher, Davenant, Amyraud, and Baxter, not only on account of their individual excellencies, but because of the part they took in the atonement controversy, during one of the most interesting periods of its history.

From their sentiments it will be seen that, under varied modes of exhibition, the two aspects of the atonement have been held by the most distinguished men of former times, who also were the most enlightened and unflinching opponents of Arminianism. That they were the latter, some of the more extreme Calvinists might be disposed to question ; † but as Dr M'Crie very justly remarks, the Arminian controversy had the effect of making Calvinistic divines

\* Lectures, vol. ii. p 426.

† “ And because it is this Synod (Dort) purposely called against Arminianism, that is the best discovery what is to be accounted Arminian or anti-Arminian doctrine, as I think, by consenting to it, I do clear myself from that *calumny*, with all men of conscience and reason that know it; so I shall think that those who go as much on the other hand, and differ from the Synod *one way*, as much as the Arminians did the *other way*, remain censurable as well as they; till somebody shall convince me that there is but *one extreme* in this case, and that a man may hold what he will *without danger*, so he be but sure it go far enough from Arminianism.”—*Baxter's Confession*, p. 25.

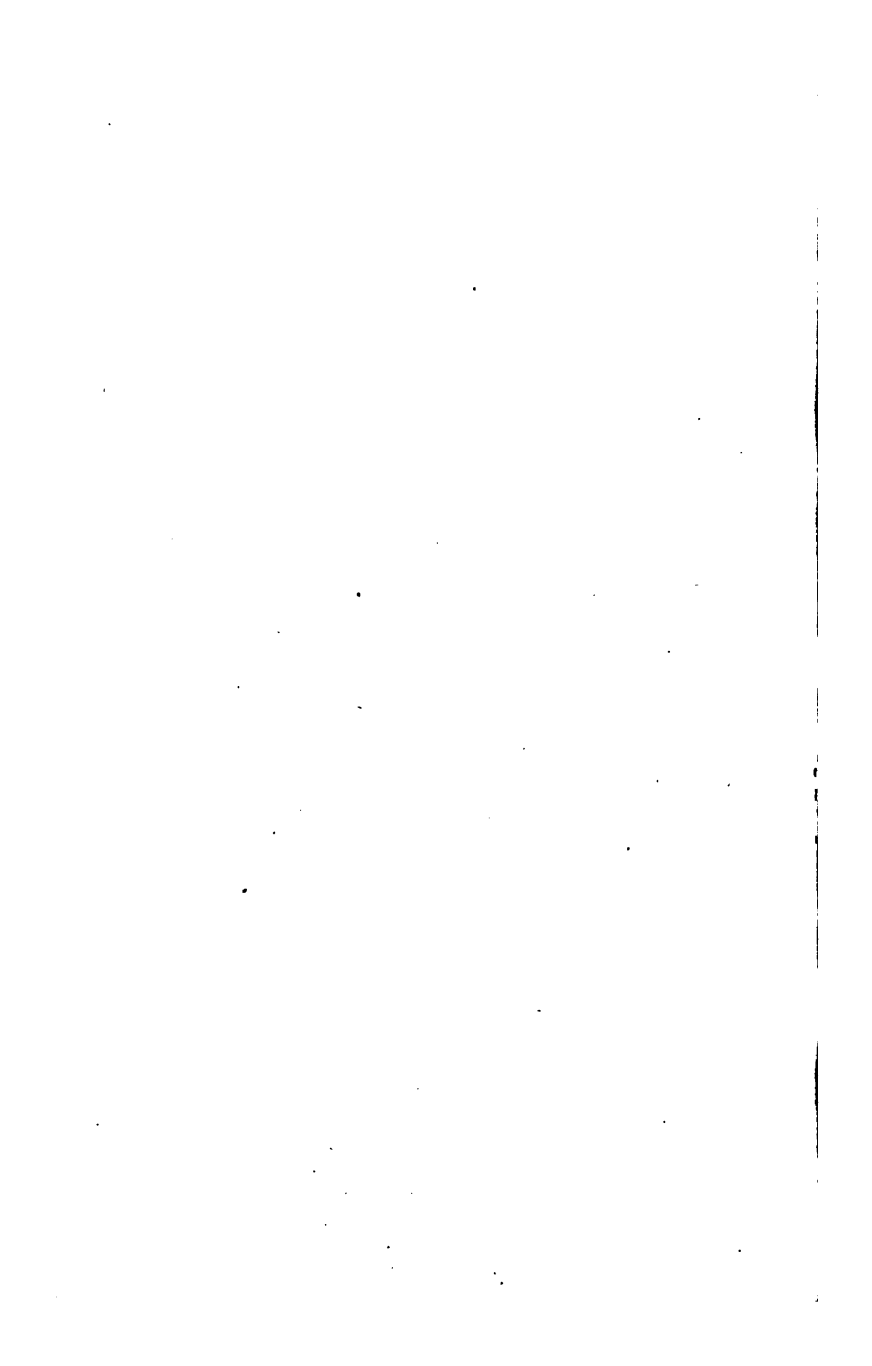
“ more shy than formerly in using the universal terms employed in Scripture, in proposing the gospel remedy, and more hampered than was necessary, either from the word of God, or their own declared principles concerning particular redemption, in proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation to sinners, and in calling on them to believe in the Saviour.”\* These observations teach an important lesson. Nothing requires to be more guarded against, in times of controversial discussion, than running to extremes. Truth generally lies in the middle, and if, in the question relating to the atonement, this be the case, the Secession Church has reason to be grateful.

We now draw this volume to a close; and, in doing so, have simply to remark, that the United Secession Church is at present in a state of peace: and that, while occasionally regret may be expressed that so much time and energy should have been consumed of late, in mere doctrinal discussions, yet the conviction is deep and general, that these discussions have not been unattended with good; that besides the feeling of satisfaction and confidence which the consciousness of having passed, with so little damage, through so severe an ordeal has inspired, there is now, in consequence of these discussions, and the decisions to which they have led, a more thorough understanding, and a somewhat fuller and distincter exhibition of those views on the all important subject of the atonement, to which the Secession, notwithstanding a few apparent inconsistencies, has substantially adhered, from its origin to the present time.

\* *Life of Dr M'Crie.*



## APPENDIX.



## APPENDIX.

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### A.

REASONS of DISSENT from the Decision of Synod, May 1845, in the case of the Memorials.

It is with extreme pain that, at a time when it is eminently desirable that truth and union should be preserved in the United Secession Church, and that its undivided energies should be employed in promoting the spiritual edification of its members, propagating the gospel at home and abroad, maintaining the principles of religious liberty, and fulfilling its duty, as one of the reformed churches, in opposing the dreadful system of Popery, we feel ourselves constrained to come forward in the responsible character of dissentients from the deed of Synod of the 9th instant, respecting the state of doctrine among us, and purporting to terminate the lamentable controversy which has now for four years agitated our church, which we had no part in introducing, and the continuance of which we have laboured to prevent, and have always deplored.

But union in doctrine lies at the basis of church union; and while a discrepancy exists there, it is our deep conviction that the primary element is wanting of that hearty confidence, zeal, and co-operation, which we fervently desire to see restored in our body, and which we regard as essential to the successful prosecution of the ends of a gospel church.

With these views, we dissent from the deed above mentioned, generally,—

Because the large number of memorials and other documents presented to the Synod on the subject of doctrine—a number unprecedented in the history of this, or, so far as we are aware, of any reformed church in Europe—itself demanded, in our judgment, a thorough consideration of the allegations and complaints made in them, of the existence and toleration of erroneous sentiments among us, and such a clear and decided deliverance as would have entirely satisfied the whole church that this Synod has no sympathy with error, and cannot connive at it.

In particular, we dissent from the above mentioned decision of the 9th instant, for the following reasons, viz. :—

1st, Because said decision contains nothing to allay the dissatisfaction which so extensively exists as to the state of doctrine in this church. This dissatisfaction is itself a serious evil, which required the most considerate and tender treatment on the part of the Synod, and the immediate application, if possible, of a suitable and adequate remedy. But what remedy has the Synod applied? It has merely referred the memorialists to those decisions, with reference to doctrine, which the Synod had already passed, and from some of which the dissatisfaction in question had mainly risen.

2d, Because for every other good purpose said decision is quite inefficient. It professes, indeed, to re-assert the doctrine of this church on the controverted points; but this it does in terms as vague and equivocal as could well have been employed: leaving it, for example, quite undetermined whether that “sufficiency for all,” which it attributes to the Saviour’s sacrifice, is understood by the Synod in the Arminian sense in which it has been explained by some, viz.—a sacrifice sufficient for all, because “offered and intended for all,” and “accomplishing in behalf of all the grand and essential objects of an atonement;” or in the sense in which it has heretofore been always understood in the Secession Church. Farther, it “enjoins on all ministers and probationers to beware of the use of doubtful, objectionable, and misleading phraseology;” but as no indication is given of the phraseology thus designated, this injunction must not only prove futile, but is liable to be pleaded in justification



of the widest departure from the "form of sound words" in which any minister or probationer may think fit to indulge.

3d, Because said decision can only strengthen the painful suspicions entertained, that this Synod has entered on a course of defection from the doctrine of the Word of God, as exhibited in our symbolical books. This it must do in many ways. We shall specify only two: '1. It was adopted in preference to a motion, which set forth the nature and extent of the atonement in the words of our symbolical books, and the ground of the gospel call in the words of the admonition of this Synod in 1830. This motion would have satisfied the memorialists; and the adoption, in preference to it, of the motion complained of, is a fact which, in the judgment of the dissentients, argues a state of things in the Synod, which greatly augments their anxieties and fears. 2. The same effect is produced on their mind by the character which the Synod has given to this controversy. It is, in the Synod's words, an "unprofitable strife." The question is, For whom did the Saviour die? In whose room did he satisfy divine justice by the once offering up of himself a sacrifice? This is the question, and the whole Arminian controversy turns on it. "The fourth article" (says Whitby, in his Postscript to the Five Points), "concerning the extent of Christ's redemption, draws all the rest (of the Arminian articles) after it." "By the Calvinistic tenets" (says Dr Hill, in his Lectures on Divinity) "is meant, that system of doctrine with regard to the *extent* of the remedy, which distinguishes those who embrace all the opinions of Calvin from those Christians who agree with him only as to the divinity of Christ and the atonement." It is a question, moreover, decided by the standards of this church, and which, instead of being suffered to rage among us for now four years, ought to have been met at once by an explicit assertion of the doctrine of these standards; and that the Synod should not only refuse to do this, as the memorialists proposed and demanded, but should characterise the whole controversy as an "unprofitable strife," betokens a state of things among us, which the dissentients cannot contemplate without deep grief and alarm.

4th, Because said decision asserts what the dissentients can by no means allow, viz.:—That the Synod had already "done

what seemed desirable, under the blessing of the Head of the Church, for guarding our fellowship against Pelagian or Arminian errors, or doctrine having such tendency." Reiterated professions of adherence to our standards cannot be accepted as a satisfactory answer to reiterated complaints of departure from them. The "Condemnation of Errors," instead of guarding our fellowship against error, has even been pleaded as authorising "such a reference in the death of Christ, as necessarily implies a universal atonement" (*Preface to Polhill*, page 13); and again, as allowing the doctrine that the "Death of Christ is a satisfaction or atonement for all, i. e. a universal atonement, ransom, or expiation" (*Statements*, page 22); which universal atonement, the dissentients need not say, necessarily supposes a corresponding universality in the covenant of grace, and in the suretyship and substitution of Christ. The "Condemnation of Errors" can be of little service in guarding our fellowship against error, while such an interpretation of it is permitted; and the Synod by refusing, on four different occasions, twice in October 1843, once in May 1844, and again in the deed from which we now dissent, to disallow, has virtually sanctioned this interpretation. That the above error on the atonement is an Arminian error, our seceding forefathers thought in 1754, calling this very doctrine "Arminianism, in somewhat of a new and more ensnaring form;" and in such a state of things this Synod cannot be regarded as having done what is desirable and necessary till all sentiments tending to such errors shall have been purged out. And the dissentients must submit that it is not by shrinking from the assertion of the Calvinistic doctrine of our Standards, in opposition to such errors, that this Synod will guard our fellowship against them.

5th, Because the doctrine which, for the above reasons, we cannot but regard said decision as countenancing, is contrary to the Word of God, in the sense expressed in our Confession and Catechisms, when these are fairly interpreted, and as they have been uniformly interpreted by the Secession Church, from the beginning until now. From among other proofs of this it is enough to quote the following:—

"Further, they acknowledge, declare, and assert, that the

eternal Son of God, who was made manifest in the flesh, did, in our nature, as the second Adam, the public head and representative of elect sinners, and the undertaking surety for them, yield a perfect obedience to the law as a covenant of works, in the room and stead of elect sinners; and that, in their room and stead alone, he bore the whole of that punishment threatened in the law, and incurred by the breach of it; and that, in his sufferings unto death, he substituted himself in the room of sinners, and endured that curse, bore that wrath, and died that death, which is the wages and just desert of every sin, and which the sinner himself should have undergone; and that the sufferings of the Son of God in our nature were a true, proper, and expiatory sacrifice, and a proper, real, and complete satisfaction unto the justice of God for sin. According to Confession, chap. viii. sect. 1, 4, 5—and chap. xi. sect. 3; Larger Catechism, Quest. lxxi., and the Scriptures cited. And they hereby reject and condemn all opposite principles held forth in the foresaid Catechism (the Assembly's), and all other Arminian and Baxterian tenets contrary to, or inconsistent herewith."—*Judicial Act and Testimony*, 1736; Article IX.

"The Presbytery did, and do hereby *reject and condemn* the tenet, That God the Father, his making a Deed of Gift unto all mankind, that whosoever of them all shall believe on his Son shall not perish, but have everlasting life, infers an *universal atonement* or redemption as to purchase."—*Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace*.

"That there is but *one special redemption*, by the death of Christ, for all the objects thereof; as he died in *one and the same respect*, for all those for whom he in *any respect* died: Or, he died out of the *greatest special love*, for all in whose room he laid down his life; with an intention of having *them all* effectually redeemed and saved, unto the glory of free grace."—*Act concerning Arminian Errors*.

"We assert and declare, that Christ died for all the elect, and for them only. The death of Christ, possessing infinite merit, is, indeed, in itself sufficient for the redemption of all mankind. But in respect of the Father's assignation, and his own intention, he died only for the elect. \* \* \* \* That

all for whom Christ died shall infallibly be saved, \* \* \* we therefore condemn, and testify against the following error, \* \* \* that Christ died in some sense for all men."—*Testimony of the General Associate Synod, May 1804.*

"It is a deviation from the truth to hold that, although all men shall not be saved, yet Christ, according to the purpose of God and his own intention, died for all men, actually expiating the guilt even of those who eventually perish."—*Testimony of the United Secession Church.*

6th. Because even if the Synod had not, by previous similar deeds, virtually sanctioned the doctrines complained of, it has, by the decision now dissented from, rendered itself liable to the charge of the sufferance of error, and of reacting the part of the General Assembly, of which the founders of the Secession thus spoke:—"The judicatures of the Church can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth (2 Cor. xiii. 8); that is, for the vindication, support, and defence of the truth. The Church representative is in a special manner the pillar and ground of the truth. She is obliged to publish and declare, to uphold and maintain the truth, in a direct opposition to such errors as are at any time vented to the prejudice and subversion of the same. The judicatures of the Church ought to point out sin and duty; they ought to rid marches between truth and error; if they do not discharge their duty when errors are broached and vented, they are chargeable with the prejudice done to truth, and with the growth and spreading of error—they are treacherous to their Lord and Master, unfaithful to the flock and heritage of God, and unto succeeding generations." \* \* \* \* As also the last General Assembly, when several gross propositions were brought to their bar, which had been excerpted by the Presbytery of Edinburgh out of two sermons that Dr Wishart had preached, yet that Assembly refused to examine whether the said propositions were contrary to our Confession of Faith, or not; but instead of this, they acquit the Doctor, upon a declaration that he made before them of his adherence unto the several Articles of our Confession of Faith, to which it was alleged the said propositions were contrary. By their above conduct, the present judicatures of this Church have involved

themselves in the heinous guilt and sin of tolerating the erroneous in ministerial and christian communion, and of supporting and countenancing the many gross and dangerous errors vented by them."—*Acts and Proceedings of the Associate Ministers and Elders, &c.*, Pp. 10-12. *Glasgow*, 1763.

For these and other reasons which might have been assigned, we dissent from said decision, and hold ourselves bound "earnestly to contend" for what we deem a part of "the faith once delivered to the saints," fully adopting, as we do, the sentiment of Calvin—"The name of peace is indeed plausible but cursed is the peace which is purchased at so great an expense as that Christ's doctrine should perish from among us, through which alone we coalesce into a true and holy unity," (*Calvin on the Acts*); and that of Moulin, in addressing the French Reformed Church, when agitated by the same controversy in which we are now engaged—"If you should content yourselves with a mere allaying of these controversies, and an imposor of silence on both parties, you will leave the spirits of men in suspense, and put error in the same rank and degree of reputation with truth; and foreign churches, who have been concerned for these new notions, will take your silence, not for a condemnation of them, but of the truth."—*Quick's Synodicon*.

James Hay.

James Pringle.

And. Marshall.

William Fraser.

John Ritchie.

David Laurie.

John Clapperton.

Alex. W. Leslie.

David Robertson.

Robert Brown.

William Marshall, Coupar-Angus.

George Jeffrey.

James Brown.

Robt. Wilson.

William Marshall, Leith.

Charles Milne.

William Orr.

John Hunter.

James Borwick.

George Low.

Andrew Thomson, elder.

John Clark, elder.

William Parlane.

Thomas Mathewson.

Henry Renton.

James Forsyth.

James Davidson, elder.

John Alison, elder.

John Cameron, elder.

Quintin Dalrymple, elder.

Hugh Dunlop, elder.

James M'Crie.

Wm. Ritchie.	John Bruce.
David T. Jamieson.	Hugh Stirling.
Andrew Rodgie.	Charles Wilson, elder.
Andw. Wilson.	Young J. Pentland, elder.
* James R. Dalrymple.	George Sandy.
George Hutton.	W. France.
Robert T. Jeffrey.	John Thomson, elder.

## ANSWERS.

It is, indeed, a time in which truth and union should be preserved in the Church; for that is the duty of the Church at all times, and the events of Providence at this season most emphatically call upon the Church to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And the Synod solemnly remind their Dissenting brethren of the direct tendency of the measures which some have been pursuing to disturb the union in truth and love of the Synod, of the Presbyteries, of the Sessions, and of the Congregations under their charge.

Union in doctrine is indeed the basis of all solid peace; and if the doctrines of God's blessed word are summarily contained in the subordinate standard books of the Church, to these doctrines, as expressed in these books, the Synod have afresh avowed their unwavering adherence, in opposition to Pelagian, Arminian, and whatever other errors are opposed to these divine doctrines; and they warn their brethren against all uncandid and unfounded allegations to the contrary.

In regard to the number of the Memorials, the Synod have only to express surprise that many more were not obtained, considering the agitation to obtain them, by public and private means, avowed in the Synod, to which some most improperly had recourse.

The first Reason is a mere assertion, which, if the agitation forbidden by the Synod be not resumed, it is confidently anticipated the contentment of the Church with the decision come to, will prove to be unfounded.

The second and third Reasons may be united in this reply:—The great object of these Reasons is to show that the Synod, in the decision complained of, give countenance to the Arminian

doctrine of universal redemption. What is the Arminian doctrine on this subject? It is, in substance, that Christ died equally for all men, procuring for all men common grace, in the exercise of which they may avail themselves of the easy terms of salvation, faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, which, it is alleged, are provided for in the covenant of grace—but without, certainly, securing salvation to any particular person: to use their own words, as quoted and condemned by the Synod of Dort, “That God the Father ordained his Son to the death of the cross, without any certain and determinate counsel of saving any particular man expressly; that Christ by his satisfaction did not certainly merit for any man salvation itself, and faith by which this satisfaction of Christ may be effectually applied unto salvation; but only that he purchased to his Father a power or a resolution to enter into a new match with mankind, and to prescribe them what new conditions soever he pleased, the performance of which conditions should depend upon men’s free will.”—*Harm. of Prot. Conf. Eng. Trans.*, pp. 552-553. The brethren must be aware that, not only to the standards as opposed to these errors, the Synod adhere as tenaciously as ever, but that in the very decisions of the Synod of which the brethren complain, the truth in opposition to them had been expressly asserted; the decision of Synod in 1843, bearing that, “in making the atonement, the Saviour bore special covenant relations to the elect, had a special love to them, and infallibly secured their salvation;”—than which deliverance, a decision more directly opposed to the Arminian doctrine, more subversive of the doctrine of universal redemption, it is impossible to frame. This decision is again recognised in the motion complained of, passed at this meeting of Synod, in which the Synod say, that “having in October 1843 declared the truth of God, respecting the relation of the Redeemer and his sacrifice to those given him by the Father, on the one hand, as infallibly securing their salvation,” &c. It is hoped, therefore, that the charge of favouring the Arminian doctrine of universal redemption will not be repeated against the Synod by any of its members.

But while the Synod have declared the relation of the Re-

deemer and his death to his own people, they have also declared their relation to sinners of mankind indiscriminately; and they are at a loss to see in what terms more plain, more exact, more suited to general apprehension, more in unison with common theological diction in the Secession Church from its commencement, and more scriptural in its undisguised import, they could have expressed themselves, than in those three words which the decision complained of includes—"Sufficient for all, suited to all, and free to all, irrespective of any distinction betwixt elect and non-elect." It would grieve us to think that our brethren should find fault with any portion of this deliverance, or any word in which it is expressed. We are persuaded that not one of them will hold or teach that there are any of the race for whose salvation the Redeemer and his righteousness are insufficient, to whose condition and necessities they are not suited, or that there exists any sinner, visited by the Gospel, to whom the Saviour, his vicarious righteousness, and his everlasting salvation, are not offered without money and without price.

But, say our brethren, the word *sufficient* is vague, because it may include Arminian error. It cannot include Arminian error, as, consistently employed in a decision condemning that very error; nor, it is hoped, after what has just been remarked, will our brethren assert that it can include that Arminian error of which they seem to suspect it, namely, the Arminian doctrine of universal redemption. While, therefore, the Synod hold that the Lord Jesus Christ was the exclusive head and surety of his own people in dying to procure eternal redemption for them, they abide by those portions of the standard books, and of former deeds of the Secession Church, in which the relation of the Redeemer and his death to mankind-sinners as such, is as expressly asserted; as in that very "Act concerning Arminian errors" from which our brethren quote—"His" (the Redeemer's) "mediatory offices, in the true and glorious nature thereof, do stand in an equal or undistinguished relation and suitability to the case and need of mankind-sinners as such; the atonement and righteousness of Christ are in themselves of a justice-satisfying and law-magnifying nature, containing the



utmost of what law and justice can require for repairing the whole breach of the covenant of works, and fulfilling the same, in order to the justification of mankind-sinners as such, who are warranted to betake themselves thereto by faith." The same doctrine is taught in other words in *Conf.*, chap. 7th, sect. 3d ; and *Larger Cat.*, Quest. 32d. It may be added that the meaning of the word objected to is plainly enough given in the deliverance of the Synod in October 1843, namely, "That his obedience to the death afforded such a satisfaction to the justice of God, as that on the ground of it, in consistency with his character and law, the door of mercy is open to all men, and a free and full salvation is presented for their acceptance;" and, in the Statement of Principles by the Synod's Committee, "The general relations of the atonement, then, are, that it is needed by all, sufficient for all, removes legal obstructions to the salvation of any, and is presented to all as God's free gift, to be received by faith."

In these circumstances, it is not "painful" only, as the brethren remark, but *sinful*, we would affectionately remind them, "that suspicions are entertained that the Synod has entered on a course of defection from the doctrine of the word of God." We are persuaded that these baseless suspicions are the root of much evil among us, and if they are not eradicated, will bring forth still more bitter fruit. The brethren are displeased because the strife which these suspicions have excited is denominated "unprofitable." We ask our brethren, What profit have they derived from them? Divided Presbyteries, divided Sessions, divided Congregations, brethren alienated from one another,—can such fruit be sweet to the taste of any one? It is no unprofitable strife to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints:" but when that faith, as far as we have found it, is held fast, to induce its common friends to contend with one another as if they were foes,—such a strife is most unprofitable and vain.

To the three remaining reasons the answers may be brief. The dissentient brethren, in the fourth reason object to the statement, that "the Synod have already done what seemed desirable, under the blessing of the Head of the Church, for

guarding our fellowship against Pelagian or Arminian errors, or doctrines having such tendency." This is a matter of opinion; but when it is considered, that the Synod anew condemn those errors—that they have excluded from their communion brethren in the ministry by whom such errors were befriended—that they issued their statement of doctrine by their Committee, and their own "Condemnation of Errors," they are persuaded that it will appear to the Church, that if they have not done every thing, for in all things we come short of the full amount of our obligations, they have at least faithfully done what they trust the Head of the Church will bless for the purity and peace of the body.

It is not the duty of the Synod, in this reply, to examine any pamphlet or speech to which the dissentients refer, but only to defend the doctrine of the synodical decisions themselves. Every member of Synod ought to know, that for the speeches of members the Synod is not responsible, nor are they in any case to be regarded as authorised expositions of synodical decisions; and that if in any book or pamphlet erroneous doctrine should be published by any member of the Synod, let him be proceeded against by constitutional means, and, as in the painful cases formerly referred to, the Synod, through the mercy of God, will endeavour to prove themselves faithful to their trust.

It may be proper to add, in regard to whatever quotations the brethren have made from the standard books of the Church, the Synod give their most cordial assent to them; but it deserves to be remarked, that it is not more unfitting that the brethren should limit their views to those passages in the standard books which assert the special relation of Christ and his death, without regarding those which imply their general reference, than it would be to select the latter to the exclusion of the former.

With the sentiment of Calvin, denouncing peace purchased at the expense of Christ's doctrine perishing from among us, we most cordially concur; but if, as we believe, Christ's doctrine is contained in the standard books of our Church, we trust it will be found that the Synod, according to the grace given them, will continue to contend with fidelity and zeal for that doctrine which, in common with their brethren, they regard as the great trust which their Lord hath committed to them, the appointed

subject of their ministry, and the only foundation of their faith, and hope, and joy.

Our confidence is, that on a calm review of the whole case, our brethren will arrive at a greater measure of satisfaction with the proceedings of the Synod than they have yet reached—that, in the spirit of the Synod's recommendation, they will abstain from unprofitable strife—and that, to the honour of our great Head, our own peace, and our zealous co-operation in works of christian usefulness, we may soon know "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

We conclude in the language of the Genevan Church to the Synod of France,—“ May the Most Blessed God continue his Divine grace and favour to you and to us, perfecting his strength in our infirmities, uniting all our hearts in a perfect charity, and grant us to keep the faith unto the end, to finish our course with joy, and to lay hold on eternal life; and that we may all be to the praise and glory of his grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

#### B.

#### STATEMENT BY DR MARSHALL.

While the subscriber has not felt himself at liberty to refuse submission to the authority of the Synod, in its decision finding him liable to be admonished, he is yet far from admitting, he utterly denies, that any of the alleged grounds of that decision are true or just. In particular, he repudiates in the strongest terms, the charge of “conduct inconsistent with a sense of up-right and honourable dealing;” and craves that the following Statement be inserted in the Synod's records. It is an extract from a paper on the subject, which was read before a Conference of the brethren of the United Associate Presbytery of Glasgow last summer.

With regard to the suppression of the Appendix, I would begin by saying,—Take the worst view of it you can; I mean, take the view of it most unfavourable to me. Say, if you please, that I was under an engagement—say that I had pledged faith to the Committee and to the Synod. Well, be it so. Have I broken

faith? Have I violated any engagement? Have I republished the Appendix, or any part of it? Where, then, is my offence?

For my part, however, I did not view the transaction in the light of an engagement. There was no dealing with me, in the Committee, with a view to my withdrawing the Appendix. Not a word was whispered on the subject. The only point brought under consideration was, whether I had charged the Professors, or other parties, with dishonesty; which, of course, I denied. It never was proposed that I should approve of the Professors' doctrine, or that I should bear with that doctrine for the time to come. Such a proposal, had it been made, would have been at once and most distinctly rejected. The idea of dropping the Appendix originated partly in a feeling of regret that I should have been supposed to charge with dishonesty a brother whom I only meant to charge with error in doctrine, partly in the hope that time would by-and-by cool the minds of parties who seemed somewhat excited; and as the suggestion was entirely spontaneous, I did not think I was bound by it, when I found, as I speedily did, that it was so much misunderstood—when I found that the report of it going abroad was doing so much mischief, was inducing many to think and to say, that I was abandoning the charge of unsound doctrine against the Professors, which was not the case,—when I found this, I certainly did think that I was not bound to adhere to it, and intimated that I thought so; but to what did all this amount? Simply to a matter of opinion, and a matter of opinion which gave birth to no overt act; for the moment I came to learn that many were of a different opinion, particularly that many of my own most attached friends were of a different opinion, that moment I paused.—I yielded to their better judgment, and gave up my opinion in deference to theirs. There the matter rested, and there it still rests.

What then, I say again, becomes of the complaint? What is the ground of it? Where is the overt act to which any of the complainants can point? Is a man to be calumniated and run down—is a man to be assailed with grave accusations by grave doctors, in a grave assembly, all for holding a mere opinion—an opinion on which he has not acted—an opinion which he has not maintained?

Before leaving this topic, I ought, perhaps, to notice what I understand has been prominently brought forward, namely, that the word used in regard to the Appendix was not the word *republish*, but the word *repress*. This seems to me to require a very brief explanation. Mr Mitchell, a member of the Committee, and I were standing before the fire-place. The other members of the Committee were filling the benches—filling them to the very extremities—so they were in contact with us, or nearly so. We talked together in an under tone; yet, at the same time, we were obliged to talk pretty loud, as there was a loud discussion going on in the Committee. Mr Mitchell said to me he regretted the Appendix. I immediately replied to him—for the thought was present to my mind—that probably the book might ere long come to another edition, and that if so, my purpose was to drop the Appendix. That instant, a member of the Committee, who was sitting close by me, started up and began to speak on the subject, which had not been mentioned before; and my impression was, and still is, that he overheard us, and that probably we were overheard by others. Besides, I was quite aware that I had spoken explicitly on the subject in the course of that day to several individuals, both in the Committee and out of it, stating my intention not to republish the Appendix. Who these individuals were I do not very distinctly recollect; but Mr Brash has kindly reminded me, in the presence of all the complainers, that he was one of them.

ANDREW MARSHALL.

The Synod have to state, that the greater part of what is contained in the Statement of Dr Marshall had been submitted to them before they came to the decision complained of; and they cannot admit that the grounds of the decision are not true or just.

Dr Marshall seems to overlook the point of criminality. He is not charged with having absolutely republished the Appendix, but with having declared his conviction, that he was not bound by the engagement into which he had entered with the Committee to suppress it; and also, with having intimated in a public journal, that the Appendix was still on sale.

The Synod must express their surprise at the ground on which Dr Marshall seems to rest his justification of his conduct in this matter, viz.—That the suggestion (to suppress the Appendix) was entirely spontaneous. Instead of lessening his obligation, it appears to the Synod to furnish additional reason for his carefully adhering to it, for it should be recollected, that the deliverance of the Committee, to a great extent, depended on the promise which it contained; nor can the mischief of which Dr Marshall complains, as flowing, or likely to flow, from the expression of his purpose, be regarded as a reason for violating his engagement; inasmuch as he who shall abide in God's tabernacle, and dwell in his holy hill, is described as one who sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not.

The Synod repudiate the description which Dr Marshall gives of his breach of faith, when he calls it an error of judgment, "a matter of opinion;" inasmuch as the terms of the agreement are abundantly plain and explicit—so plain and explicit, that it is difficult to understand how two interpretations could be put upon them; nor can the case of a violation of an engagement be easily supposed, in which the same apology might not be pleaded.

The "overt acts" with which the Synod charge Dr Marshall are—his declaring that he did not hold himself bound by the promise to suppress the Appendix—his intimating that it was on sale as heretofore,—and his virtually republishing much of what was offensive in it, and that, in some respects, in a more aggravated form, in his letter in the journal already alluded to, and in a pamphlet entitled "Remarks," &c.

The Synod know nothing of Dr Marshall's conversation with Mr Mitchell and others respecting his dropping or suppressing the Appendix; nor do these at all affect the case, since the terms of the agreement ultimately come to were those which Dr Marshall himself dictated, and formed the only ground of judgment submitted to the Synod, and by which Dr Marshall's conduct should have been regulated, and on which the Synod decided.

REASONS OF DISSENT BY REV. WILLIAM  
MARSHALL, LEITH.

1. The motion proposes to censure Dr Marshall for not proceeding to libel, although Dr Marshall had again and again, in open Court, expressed his willingness to do so.

2. In the course of the discussion, it was stated by Mr Somerville and others, that the transaction in the Committee, with regard to which Dr Marshall is said to have broken faith with the Synod, was not in the form of a compact or agreement, but was a mere spontaneous announcement of Dr Marshall's intention.

3. Because Dr Marshall has stated in open Court, that he did not view the transaction in the light of a compact, and his Statement is corroborated by the Synod's Minute, as well as by the testimony of Mr Somerville and others, who were members of the Committee.

4. Because it was again and again stated in Court, that the matter of the Appendix to Dr Marshall's work, entitled "The Catholic Doctrine of Redemption Vindicated," had been taken up by the Presbytery of Glasgow, to which Dr Marshall belongs; and, after being considered both judicially and extrajudicially, had been allowed to drop, in consequence of explanations given to his brethren by Dr Marshall.

5. Because, to introduce the matter to the Synod, except through the Presbytery, was, in such circumstances, a breach of order.

6. Because a promise to suppress an Appendix to a published work cannot reasonably be understood to mean any thing more than a promise to leave it out of succeeding editions. Nothing more than this is understood by such language in ordinary cases; and, in particular, this is the *legal* interpretation of the words.

7. Because Dr Marshall having given this as *his* meaning, christian charity demanded that his word should have been taken, more especially when it was confirmed by the testimony of others who had heard him express his intention both before and after it had been stated to the Committee.

8. Because the motion proposes to censure Dr Marshall for answering through the press a published pamphlet, whereas, it is the duty of every friend to truth, to defend it as openly as it is assailed, whether the assailant belong to the same communion or to another. It is denied, that in not bringing these charges before the Church Courts, Dr Marshall "has pursued an unconstitutional course," or that bringing such charges before the Church Courts is the "only competent way." An equally constitutional, and far more competent way for putting down error, is a discussion from the press. The only proper and effectual antidote to an erroneous publication, is another publication in reply. A process before Church Courts cannot answer the purpose half so well, for it may never be known beyond the precincts of the Court itself, while the heretical publication may be circulating over the land. "No point of delicacy," says Adam Gib, who will be acknowledged to be as good a judge of constitutional order as any we now have in the Secession Church, "can require that a defence of the cause of truth and duty, should be more private than the injury which it has suffered."

9. Because, while Dr Marshall is blamed for acting unconstitutionally, the whole proceedings in the case have been contrary to our "Forms of Process," as is pointed out in the Reasons of another Protester, and the motion now proposes to censure Dr Marshall on a grave charge; while he has not been so much assisted at the Synod's bar.

10. Because, in the opinion of the subscriber, the proposal to censure any man in such circumstances is altogether disorderly, and to carry such a proposal into effect would be in the highest degree arbitrary and tyrannical.

WM. MARSHALL, *Minister*.

To the above Reasons of Dissent, it is answered by the Synod:—

1st. That it is not a correct statement that Dr Marshall repeatedly declared in Synod his readiness to proceed by libel; inasmuch as he publicly allowed that he was not prepared to substantiate in Court the charges complained of by the senior Professor; and stated that he would proceed by libel, only if the



Court did (what, however, it refused to do) lay upon him the necessity of adopting such a course, and thus virtually relieve him from all personal responsibility in the matter.

2d. That, though not formally designated a compact, yet the circumstances in which Dr Marshall expressed his "purpose to suppress the Appendix altogether," and the objects accomplished by it, gave it all the weight of a solemn engagement.

3d. That the Synod could not be guided by the sentiments of particular members of the Committee, but by the very explicit terms of the agreement itself.

4th. That, in so far as this Reason states, that the complaint against Dr Marshall had, "in consequence of explanations given to the brethren by Dr Marshall, been dropped, it states what is altogether unfounded; inasmuch as no individual declared himself fully satisfied with these explanations, and the member who was chiefly instrumental in bringing about said conference, declared that he was not satisfied at all, and would not pledge himself not to bring the case forward in another form.

5th. That the matter *was* regularly introduced to the Court; inasmuch as it related to a compact between the Synod and Dr Marshall, and was also introduced by complaint on the part of the senior Professor.

6th. That the Synod demur to this statement on the same grounds on which they have disapproved of Dr Marshall's conduct. Even if the *legal* meaning of the term "suppress," were, as here stated (for which they have only the Dissident's own assertion), Dr Marshall, in a public journal, declared that he did not consider himself bound by his compact even to this extent; but that he held himself at perfect liberty to republish the Appendix or not, as he thought proper.

7th. That, even admitting that Dr Marshall declared that he meant by the word "suppress," that he would not *republish*, he could not be warranted by such an understanding of his agreement, to state, that he, nevertheless, held himself at perfect liberty to republish.

8th. That Dr Marshall was not censured for publishing in vindication of truth, but for bringing serious and unfounded charges, affecting the orthodoxy of many of his brethren in the ministry, and

especially of the senior professor; which charges, if he believed them to be true, the law of Christ and our constitutional forms, required to be first brought before the Judicatories of the Church. The statement of Adam Gib, quoted in this reason, is altogether inapplicable to this case; inasmuch as it relates to "the defence of the cause of truth," and not to grave and libellous charges brought against brethren.

9th. That the Synod have many precedents for acting in this case as they did; and altogether refuse the allegation that the forms of Process have, in any respect, been violated.

10th. That this is merely the opinion of the Dissentient; and the Synod hold, that in conducting this case, as well as in the finding in which it issued, they acted with all the leniency which a regard to truth, to justice, and to the discipline of our Church permitted.

The Committee deem it proper to state, that in consequence of the late hour at which these reasons of dissent were presented, they were compelled to submit answers very hurriedly framed; but which, nevertheless, seem to them completely to set aside the force of said reasons.

### C.

Dissent from the deed whereby the Synod ruled that they proceed with the relevancy and probation of the libel of Drs Hay and Marshall against Dr Brown, at one and the same time:—

1. Because said deed is directly opposed to the rule laid down in the Form of Process to be observed by the United Secession Church,—a rule admitting of no difference of procedure in coming to the consideration of any case of libel. Chap. VI., Sect. III., § 12. "If appearance is made, the first step is to read over the libel, and consider any objections which may be made to its relevancy. If found relevant, the party is interrogated as to the truth of the charge. Should he make confession, the Presbytery, if satisfied with it, proceeds to inflict censure, or if not satisfied, they proceed to take evidence."

2. Because on behalf of said deed, it may not be argued that relevancy of the libel includes probation, as the section quoted in the preceding reason most clearly shows. It is only after the libel has been found relevant, and the Court has not been satisfied with confession made, that it proceeds to probation. If farther proof were needed, appeal might be made to one, once no mean authority, as to forms of procedure in Church Courts. *Pardovan's Collections*, Book IV., Title III., Sect. I. "A libel is a law syllogism, consisting of the *proposition* or *relevancy*.  
 \* \* \* \* The second part of the subsumption or probation.  
 \* \* \* \* The third part of the conclusion or sentence."

3. Because while in behalf of said deed, the Synod have not only no sanction from their own Form of Process, but the reverse, they have as little from any competent authority of the present day on matters of Church form.—Dr Hill, in his Treatise on the several Judicatories of the Church of Scotland, fourth edition, page 54, on this point, says—"If the minister appear, according to citation, the libel is read over to him. His answers are also read. The relevancy of the libel is then discussed. This is indispensably the first proceeding. A libel cannot be taken to probation before the relevancy is discussed." Again, the Church Law Society in their *Styles of Writs and Forms of Procedure in the Church Courts of Scotland*, pp. 108, 109, on the same point, say—"on the day fixed for the trial, the Presbytery being met, and constituted, call for the minister, and if he appear, the libel is read over to him along with his answers, if he have lodged any. The Presbytery then proceed to consider the relevancy of the libel. Should the libel appear to be partly relevant and partly irrelevant, it is competent to amend it by striking out the irrelevant part, if that can be done, without altering the nature of the charge. Should the libel be found irrelevant, the whole proceedings fall to the ground. If the libel be found relevant the minister is dealt with, with a view to confession; but should he still deny the truth of the libel, a proof is then taken by the Presbytery."

4. Because amidst other reasons, it was especially needful that in this case there should have been the strictest attention to usual form, in justice to parties at the bar of the house—in

justice to the truth as held by this Church as in the words of the Rev. Mr Stark, Forbes, at last meeting, as reported by Messrs Quigley and Kennedy, in their proceedings of Synod, p. 26, "The inquiry which would ensue as to the relevancy of the libel, would soon fix what were the doctrines entertained by the Church," and that there might be a final and happy issuing of all doctrinal discussions in this Synod.

George Jeffrey.

James M'Crie.

Wm. Marshall, Leith.

James Pringle.

John Clapperton.

D. Robertson.

Andrew M'Farlane.

George Low.

James Gilfillan.

David Laurie.

William Orr.

Robert T. Jeffrey.

Hugh Stirling.

Robert Wilson.

The subscribers, for the following reasons, dissent from the Deed of Synod, refusing to consider the relevancy of the libel, before entering on the probation :—

1. Because the refusal to consider the relevancy of the libel, at this stage of the business, is a manifest deviation from the "Form of Process," which regulates the proceedings of this Court, and from the order laid down by writers of the highest authority on the procedure of the Church.

2. Because the refusal was gone into, in opposition to the earnest wish of one of the libellers that the relevancy should be first considered, otherwise injustice would be done to him in this important cause.

3. Because, if the relevancy had been first considered, the major proposition of the libel would have been disposed of, without being mixed up with "personalities," which mixture, however disagreeable, becomes unavoidable, if the relevancy and probation are considered jointly.

4. Because, in the judgment of the dissentients, the Synod, as the representatives of a Calvinistic Church, should have been prepared to admit the relevancy, or show reasons to the contrary; and such an admission would have done much to satisfy the congregations under the Synod's inspection, as to the Synod's

soundness in the faith, whereas, the refusal to consider the relevancy of the libel, and give a distinct deliverance on it, leaves room for suspicion either that there is error among us requiring to be sheltered, or a reluctance to avow unwavering adherence to the truth as hitherto most surely believed among us.

John Bruce.

James Dunlop, elder.

William Parlane.

Hugh Dunlop, elder.

Henry Renton.

Charles Milne.

Thomas Mathewson.

**ANSWERS to REASONS of DISSENT for MESSRS GEORGE JEFFREY and Others, and MESSRS JOHN BRUCE and Others.**

In answer to those Reasons, the Synod would remark :—

1. That the rule in the Form of Process referred to, simply bears that if objections were made to the relevancy by the party libelled, these objections must be first disposed of. Here no such objections were stated. Besides, the rule is framed with a view principally to cases of ordinary discipline, and not to the trial of charges of heresy, which are happily rare in the Secession Church, and form the subject of a separate section, in which nothing is said about the order of procedure.

2. The dissentients seem to consider that the question of relevancy relates solely to a consideration of the major proposition; while in fact it includes (1) The form of the libel as a correct syllogism; (2) Whether the errors stated in the major proposition are truly errors; and (3) Whether circumstances are alleged sufficient, if proved, to bring these home to the accused. No rule can be pointed out requiring a Court to consider these separate questions in any particular order—and it is competent to take them up in any way they please. It was consequently competent to the Synod to take up the last first, and in judging of it to look into the publication itself, which was before them, as well as to the partial citations made from it.

3. The course followed, if not the most formal, was the one best adapted for arriving at the merits of the case. A perusal of the libel made it evident that serious objections existed to its form. It was not in truth a correct syllogism. None of the

allegations in the minor proposition agreed with the corresponding articles in the major. Dr Brown was charged with having published a pamphlet, passages from which were cited; and the doctrines which these were said to teach or imply are particularly deduced, but in not one instance was the doctrine thus alleged to be taught or implied in these passages expressed in the same terms as the errors libelled in the major. Proceeding according to the rules contended for by the dissentients, the Synod would have been necessitated to throw out the libel altogether, without any consideration either of the alleged errors in the major proposition, or the doctrines alleged in the minor to be taught or implied,—a proceeding which, on many accounts, would have been highly inexpedient.

4. The argument of the dissentients amounts to this,—that, without inquiry whether facts are stated in the minor proposition amounting to the error libelled in the major, the Synod are bound to determine whether these are errors or not. Such a principle would lead to a gross abuse of this form of proceeding—it would enable any one to harass the Court by compelling them, merely by libelling a brother before them, to determine the truth or error of any abstract proposition in Theology he chooses to state, although it is not so much as averred, except in the general words of Style, that the party libelled holds or teaches any such proposition; and no facts are alleged which, although proved, would amount to prove that he had done so.

5. No injustice was done to the libellers by following the course complained of. On the contrary, *more* than justice was done to them. They were influenced, it is to be presumed, by a belief that the errors they charged against Dr Brown were really taught by him; and their object, it must be presumed, was to get the decision of the Synod on his guilt or innocence of holding these errors. The Synod enabled them to get to this point at once, by removing all preliminary objections out of their way. Neither can the dissentients complain of the course followed, unless they are prepared to say that the resolution of the Synod excluded the consideration of objections they had to offer to the relevancy. If injustice was done to any, it was to Dr Brown, who had an unquestionable right to require a decision on the

relevancy of the major proposition before the Court should look at the probation.

6. The fact that the publication was admitted, and the whole probation was thus before the Synod, was another strong reason why it was expedient to follow the course adopted.

7. The course followed is authorised by Pardovan, in the following passage—Book IV., Title III., Sec. III.—“In causes intricate and difficult, the discussing of the relevancy may be delayed till probation be taken, and thus greater light being thereby given, both relevancy and probation may be advised jointly, as the Lords of Session and Privy Council have oftentimes done;” and is similar to that followed by the General Associate Synod in the two cases of libel against Mr Imrie.

8. The Synod believe that they followed the course best fitted to give satisfaction to the congregations under their inspection, and that had they followed the course contended for by the dissentients, this would not have been the result.

#### D.

REASONS of DISSENT against the Decision of Synod, in reference to the *third count* of the libel.

1. Because the relevancy of the doctrine charged is not asserted in the decision, and therefore it seems still left uncertain whether or not it is in the estimation of this Synod an error to maintain that the Lord Jesus Christ has “made atonement or satisfaction for the sins of all men.”

2. Because the character of the Church cannot stand fair in the eyes of the religious community, so long as it is uncertain whether or not she adheres unequivocally to, and testifies as becomes her, in behalf of the vital doctrine that on all those for whom Christ died he certainly bestows salvation.

3. Because the doctrine of our Lord's atonement is the doctrine on which every Christian rests his hopes and his eternal welfare, and therefore for its own sake every decision affecting it ought to be clear and unequivocal.

4. Because the latter part of the decision seems to imply that

unless Christ has in some sense made atonement for all men, there can be no "foundation laid in his death for a full, sincere, and consistent offer of the gospel to all mankind"—a doctrine which the dissentients emphatically deny, holding, as they do, that the salvation offered freely and fully to all men in the gospel is none other than the perfect salvation which the Saviour has wrought out in the room of his peculiar people.

D. Robertson.	Robert Wilson.
John Clapperton.	Hugh Stirling.
James Gilfillan.	John Meikleham.
Henry Renton.	Thomas Mathewson.
George Low.	James Dunlop, elder.
Wm. Marshall, Leith.	Hugh Dunlop, elder.
William Fraser.	John Bruce.
Charles Milne.	James Pringle.
William Orr.	Alex. Cuthbert.
James M'Crie.	John Ritchie.
David Laurie.	James R. Dalrymple.

## ANSWERS.

It is deemed a sufficient Answer to the above Reasons of Dissent, to state, that the doctrine of the Synod on the atonement and satisfaction of our Lord Jesus Christ is clearly exhibited in our subordinate Standards, and recent decisions of this Court,—and that the Synod felt itself called upon to do no more than to ascertain whether the views held by Dr Brown were in accordance with the Scriptures, and our symbolical books,—and they feel satisfied that an unprejudiced consideration of his reasons and defences is all that is necessary to make such accordance manifest.

## E.

The following is the entire paragraph from Dr Balmer's Academical Lectures :—

"I would advert next to some of those texts in which the



sacrifice of Christ is mentioned, in such terms as imply that its efficacy arises not simply from divine appointment, but from its intrinsic excellence, or, in other words, from the divine dignity of his person. 'But Christ being come a High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit,' that is probably through his divine nature, 'offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.' And again, 'sacrifice and offering, and burnt offering and offerings for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein.' 'Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' And again, 'Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' And again, 'He loved the church, and gave himself for her.' 'He purchased the church with his own blood.' If these and similar passages do not prove that no other sacrifice than that of Christ could have availed, they annihilate completely the theory, that his sacrifice owes its virtue entirely to divine appointment; for in these, and in many other passages, his sacrifice is represented as deriving its virtue from its intrinsic excellence, or from his infinite dignity and purity. Not that even the sacrifice of Christ would have been efficacious without divine appointment; but that, independently of any positive appointment, it possessed inconceivable value. In a word it is sufficient, not because it was appointed; but it was appointed because it is sufficient."

## F.

We give here in full what is contained in Mr Hog's "Remarks on the Review of a Conference betwixt Epaphroditus and Epa-

phras about Principal Hadow's Sermon, &c., with Queries concerning the Extent of Christ's Death," published in 1719.

"I shall then deliberately pass every thing else, and proceed to the alleged universality, or universal extent of Christ's death, as completing his whole purchase. Our Reviewer gives no sufficient account of what thereof is contained in the 'Conference, to which I remit the reader. The Reviewer complains that the author of the 'Conference' is reserved on that head. I do acknowledge that this is a noble controversy, worthy of the most serious and concerned inquiry, and therefore I shall propose some important queries about it to the very Reverend Principal and the Reviewer, or other divines; and in case of satisfying answers, I shall most cheerfully return my public acknowledgments of gratitude. I only premise to prevent mistake, and evite danger in a time wherein there is a noise of ecclesiastical proceedings, that I am entirely of the sentiment of our Westminster Divines in that matter, and every thing else contained in our Standards, and do in singleness propose the queries, as a mean for information in a controversy, straitening on either hand, and from no party view, but in sincerity, that the true foundation of general gospel offers may be set in a clear light.

"Forasmuch as the Scripture declareth expressly it is the will of him who sent Christ, that *whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life*, John vi. 40; and consequently, a gospel minister may, and ought to say to every one of his hearers, if you in particular *shall see the Son, and believe on him, you shall have everlasting life*.—See Practical Use of Saving Knowledge, subjoined to our Confession.

"Query 1. What foundation for this general and particular offer can be assigned distinct from a suitable extent of Christ's death and purchase; or what other foundation can be given for the sure and invariable connexion betwixt faith and salvation, in the case of any man to whom the gospel is preached, and who herein are distinguished from the fallen angels, though yet the intrinsical worth of the purchase, which is of infinite value, might have reached them, had it been destined for that effect?

"Taking it for granted, that the gospel call and invitation

and the command to believe, oblige every one unto whom the gospel is preached to believe and accept of the offered Saviour and salvation, with this encouragement, that in case they *do believe they shall be saved*, Isaiah xlv. 22; Prov. ix. 1, 2, 3; 1 John iii. 22; Rom. x. 21; John vi. 37; Rev. iii. 20, &c.

“ Q. 2. What salvation is it which the Lord commands to be offered, whether a purchased salvation, yea or not? The Scriptures know no unpurchased salvation, and if purchased, may it not be alleged that the extent of the purchase is such as warranteth the minister to say to any man, *If you come to Christ, you shall in no ways be cast out?* Or may this be said without any regard to the purchase?

“ Considering that the command and commission to the apostles of Christ, and their successors in the ordinary ministry, beareth their being empowered and required to offer Christ to every one of their hearers, or to preach the gospel to every creature, as the Marrow from Dr Preston observes, Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 16.

“ Q. 3. What are they consequentially enjoined to say to every creature, which will not fully amount to that which is quarrelled in the Marrow, viz. Christ had died for you in so far, that if you will take him and accept of his righteousness, you shall have him; or let some other foundation for this offer be assigned? A large account of this whole matter may be read in the worthy Mr Trail’s ‘Stedfast Adherence,’ &c. cited at the end of the ‘Conference.’

“ It is a known and solemn reproof our Lord gives unto the rejecters of gospel offers, viz. *they will not come to him that they may have life*; which clearly importeth a full warrant from the Lord unto them to come, with assurance that they shall have life if they come.

“ Q. 4. What foundation for this assurance can be assigned distinct from Christ’s death, or can encouragements towards salvation be deduced from any other considerations of the alone Saviour than as he is crucified? Will it not then follow from

hence, that he died and was crucified for all to whom the gospel is preached; I mean only in so far as was necessary to warrant and bear them out in their obligation to accept a crucified Saviour; or, shall we say, that the Lord obligeth them to accept a Saviour, as crucified, who yet, in no sense whatsoever, was crucified for them?

"It is an uncontested truth that the unbelief of those to whom the gospel is preached is their great, and properly their ruining sin; for were it not for their unbelief, their other sins, how great soever, would not prove ruining to them. And herein the sin of unbelievers who enjoy the gospel, is deservedly aggravated beyond the sin of fallen angels, who never had the offers of salvation made to them, Heb. ii. 1, 2, and iv. 1, 2; Acts xiii. 26, &c. It is also observed by our divines, that the chief source of the unpardonableness of the sin against the Holy Ghost issueth from its consisting mainly in an utter and blasphemous rejecting of the only remedy.

"Q. 5. Will not this import some interest in that alone remedy which the fallen angels have not? (Whose nature our Lord did not assume), and all have unto whom the gospel is preached. I mean only in so far that the remedy would be effectual for their relief, in case they applied for it by faith. I would gladly know what foundation for this can be found severed from Christ's death? And if none can be, may it not be thought to be extended in a sense proportioned to the offered salvation?

"We all acknowledge that the wickedest of men are commanded to pray, which was the injunction of an apostle to Simon Magus, and sure they are commanded to pray in the name of Christ, and with an eye to the alone Mediator, unto whom the fallen angels may by no means look, nor can they do so.

"Q. 6. Whether this will not import some interest that all to whom the gospel is preached have in that Mediator? I understand only, so much as is comprised in the obligation lying upon them to pray in his name? Or whether this will not infer an extent of his death necessary to ground the foresaid obligation? This, one might allege, is the more remarkable from the Scrip-

tural passage, (1 Tim. ii. 8,) where we are commanded *to pray every where*, and which appears to be founded upon or deduced from the words preceding, viz. ‘*There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.*’ And, though a verse intervene, yet the conclusion seemeth to be immediately deduced from the position, *he gave himself a ransom for all.* It is true there are weighty arguments to the contrary, which I leave entire, and only propose the fore-mentioned queries, that these and the like scruples may obtain a clear and satisfying answer.”

## G.

We insert here the following Extract from a DRAFT of an OVERTURE prepared and published by a Committee of the Associate Reformed Synod, America, for the purpose of illustrating and defending the Doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith. The Committee were, Rev. Dr John Mason, Messrs Robert Annan and John Smith. The writer appears to be Mr R. Annan, Philadelphia. 1787.

That there is a sufficiency in the atonement of Jesus Christ for all men, is undoubtedly a great and glorious truth. But the sufficiency of his death, and extent of it, must be considered in a twofold light; first, either with relation to the nature of sin; or, secondly, the number of sinners pardoned and saved. That the necessity of Christ's infinite atonement does not arise from the number, but the nature of sin,—or that the very nature of sin itself requires an infinite atonement in order to its honourable remission, cannot be denied by men of sound understandings. Such an atonement is indispensably necessary to the pardon of one act of sin, and the salvation of one sinner, consistently with the glory of the Supreme Lawgiver, the obligation of his law, and sustentation of his government; and the end thereof may be completely gained in the salvation of one. Sin, though distinguished into various acts, is in itself one thing—one corrupt principle—one vicious habit; it is enmity against God,—it is spiritual darkness, spiritual death, spiritual bondage. There-

fore the infinite sufficiency of Christ's death is necessary to the pardon of one sin, and the salvation of one sinner; and, indeed, if this were not the case, it would not be necessary to the pardon of any supposed number, because numbers do not vary nature, nor degrees alter species or kind.

The dispute about the extent of the death of Christ, therefore, can take place only on the second question, to wit, the number of sinners to be saved by it. That it is sufficient for the salvation of all men is not denied by any; and doubtless all men would be saved by it, if it were accepted by them. The sacred writings clearly teach this; and on this ground the revelation and offer of it to all men must rest.

When we speak of the sufficiency of the death and satisfaction of Christ in this last sense, perhaps we err in regulating our ideas on this great subject by the idea of commutation or commercial justice among men. As a thousand pounds in specie, by whomsoever paid, whether by the surety or debtor, is sufficient to cancel a bond or discharge a debt of that amount. But it is manifest no such ideas, strictly taken, ought to be admitted here. Let us say it with reverence, God is not a merchant. Transferable property is out of the question. The rectoral justice of the Supreme Governor of the universe is the subject to which we must fix our attention. And the only proper idea we can form of the sufficiency of the atonement of Christ is this—Is it a sufficient display of the glory of the Divine character, —of his holiness, justice, hatred of sin, and goodness as a moral Governor? Is it sufficient to maintain the authority and obligation of his law, sustain the moral system, and give energy to his government over rational and free agents, while he pardons sin and receives the rebel into favour? After forming this idea of it, which is certainly the true and just one, there arises another question: In the room of what creatures is it morally fit and proper to admit this atonement? In answer to the question, let it be observed, that as all men were comprehended in Adam, in a double sense, both as the natural root from which they all proceed, and as their representative in the first covenant, —as they are all originally under one law or covenant, as sin is one and the same thing in them all, and as one and the same

penalty is due to them all; and furthermore, as the Son of God assumed the common nature of them all—was made under the very same law which they had all broken, and not only fulfilled the obedience required by the precepts, but also endured the penalty of that very law which they had violated, and to which penalty they had by transgression exposed themselves,—there is doubtless a sufficiency in his death for them all, that is, it would comport with the glory of the Divine character, the sustentation of his government, the obligation and honour of his law, and the good of the rational and moral system, to save them all, provided they all accepted of Christ's atonement, yielded submission to him, and returned to God by him. In this sense it may be said, "Christ tasted death for every man—is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world; and God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And this lays a sufficient foundation for that injunction, "Go, preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned. Go, speak to the people all the words of this life." Every legal bar and obstruction in the way of the salvation of all men is removed; let them only accept and submit to Jesus Christ as their Prophet, Priest, and King. All things are ready, and all are made welcome to the marriage and the marriage supper.

But while we allow the sufficiency of the atonement of Christ for the salvation of all men, at the same time, it is absolutely certain, both from the testimony of God's word, and from fact and experience, that many men reject it, and die rejecting it. Now, did God design to save, by the death of his Son, those who finally reject it? Is there a sufficiency in the death of Christ to save men, whether they receive or reject the benefit of it? Most certainly not. The gospel constitution assures us, that such, instead of being saved by it, will find this rejection infinitely to aggravate their guilt and condemnation. Christ will profit them nothing. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Did Christ, then, die at an absolute uncertainty whether any should be saved by his death or not? Surely not.